University of Alberta

Viktor Tsoi, Rock Star as Soviet Hero: Individual Resistance in the Lermontov Tradition

by

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Abstract

This research investigates the notion of hero as realized in the life and music of Soviet rock star Viktor Tsoi (21 June 1962 – 15 August 1990). It examines how Tsoi was defined as a hero during the Glasnost era and how that resulting notion of hero uncovers a history of unresolved conflict between the individual and the collective, signifying that the heroic ideal is ritualistic.

This work is primarily based on a detailed literary, social and musical analysis of Tsoi's lyrics and music placed within the historical context. The study provides literary comparisons to Mikhail Lermontov (Romanticism) and Fyodor Gladkov (Socialist Realism), and musical comparisons to Vladimir Vysotsky the bard, Igor Tal'kov the patriotic rocker, and the punk group Sex Pistols. It includes discussion of Glasnost, nationalism, the Soviet army, youth activities, alcoholism, and Soviet rock culture. The result is a unique study of an enduring significant historical phenomenon.

Acknowledgements

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play; and lastly, my husband Ryan, who has nurtured my musical interests and put my wishes above his own, in order to provide me with the support and freedom to realize this dream.

To my husband Ryan

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Introduction

Dobroe utro, poslednij geroj!
Dobroe utro, tebe i takim, kak ty!
Dobroe utro, poslednij geroj!
Zdravstvuj, poslednij geroj!

Good morning, last hero!
Good morning to you, and to those like you!
Good morning last hero!
Hello, last hero!

-Viktor Tsoi, 1984 [1]

On 15 August 1990, Soviet rock star Viktor Tsoi was killed in an automobile accident. "Waves" of people attended his funeral, and mothers, workers and collective farmers reported that their children refused to eat - some parents claiming that it was necessary to physically restrain their children, holding them back to keep them from throwing themselves to the ground at the cemetery.[2] Some even went to extremes, such as young women keeping vigil for months at the gravesite and vowing chastity in honor of their dead hero.[3] A cult around the legend of Tsoi arose, complete with mass memorial sites at various life and death points. To this day, sixteen years after his death, Viktor Tsoi is remembered by the Russian rock community in memorial concerts, by grieving fans at memorial sites such as the famous Tsoi wall on Arbat Street in Moscow, and even by post-Soviet youth, who are

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[1] Viktor Tsoi, "Poslednij geroj," *Nachal'nik Kamchatki*, performed by Kino, recorded 1984, 1986, Andrey Tropillo (Producer), re-mastered at Studio MMS, Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," in Marianna Tsoi and Aleksandr Zhitinskij, eds. *Viktor Tsoi: stikhi, dokumenty, vospominaniya* (St. Petersburg: Novi Helikon, 1991) , 306.

[2] Marianna Tsoi, "Tochka otschyota," in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 38.

[3] Thomas Cushman, *Notes From Underground: Rock Music Counterculture in Russia* (USA: State University of New York, 1995) , 157-165.

too young to remember the living Tsoi. Clearly, the impact of his death on many youth can only be compared to the likes of western rock legends Elvis Presley, Jim Morrison, John Lennon or Kurt Cobain.

The idea of the unlikely compatibility between rock star legend and Soviet hero provokes an examination of how the heroic ideal is shaped. The following composition is a study of the relationship between art and historical reality, examining in particular how Viktor Tsoi was defined as a hero during the Glasnost era and how that resulting notion of hero uncovers a history of unresolved conflict between the individual and the collective, signifying that the heroic ideal is ritualistic.

Tsoi, who is often called *poslednij geroj* (the last hero), after the title of one of his popular songs, was indeed a hero to many. What does it mean to be a hero in the Russian and Soviet traditions? It is logical to begin our exploration with the first written definitions of hero and move on towards subsequent years to examine the development of meaning. Lomonosov's eighteenth century dictionary, the first Russian dictionary, defines *geroj* (hero) firstly as a title used by the Slavic pagans to name sons of gods or goddesses, secondly as one who exhibits characteristics of courage in war and has physical prowess, and thirdly as the subject of an epic such as the *Iliad*.[4] By 1978 the connection of hero to deity is lost; rather revolution and war bring significant attention to the hero as a warrior and one who has the ability

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[4] *Slovar' akademii rossijskoj 1789-1794*, s.v. "geroj." (Moscow: E. R. Dashkovoj Moskovskij Gumanitarnyj Institut, 2002) 2:34-35.

to do exceptionally courageous feats.[5] In three other dictionaries[6] of various dates, hero is defined consistently as a soldier or brave man, with epic and novel and film subjects appearing at the end only in the more recent volume. It is clear that the longstanding general notion of hero has remained connected to physically commanding men demonstrating immense strength, most often depicted in battle and sacrifice. Sacrifice is of the utmost importance with the addition of two special types of hero: *Geroj Sovetskogo Soyuza* (Hero of the Soviet Union) and *Geroj Sotsialisticheskogo Truda* (Socialist Work Hero). A hero proves his commitment to the state through death or hard work that surpasses expectations. So how does a rock star, a heroic figure supposedly extracted from the west, a type that is usually not associated with the form of a soldier or endowed with physical strength, fit into this heroic tradition?

It is important to answer this question as the youth of the Gorbachev era represented a significantly large section of Soviet society; about one quarter of the population was under thirty at the time of Viktor Tsoi.[7] By 1988, a time of significant "Kinomania," over 70 million Soviet residents were between the ages of fourteen to thirty-two and two-thirds of the population was urban based.[8] This was a huge jump

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[5] *Slovar' russkogo yazyka*, s.v. "geroj." (Moscow: Sovetskaya entsiklopediya, 1978) 1:120.

[6] *Slovar' russkogo yazyka*, s.v. "geroj." (Moscow: Russkij yazyk, 1981) 1:307; *Slovar' russkogo yazyka*, s.v. "geroj." (Moscow: Russkij yazyk, 1989) 1:132; *Russkij tolkovyj slovar'*, s.v. "geroj." (Moscow: Russkij yazyk, 1997) 1:95.

[7] Andrew Wilson and Nina Bachkatov, eds., *Living With Glasnost: Youth and Society in a Changing Russia* (London: Penguin, 1988) , 20.

[8] Jim S. Riordan, "Soviet Youth: Pioneers of Change," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 40. No. 4 (October 1988) : 557.

in urban youth compared to the prior generation. To understand why Tsoi was a hero provides clues as to what that emerging generation was seeking in a significant time of history making.

It was truly a momentous stage on which Viktor Tsoi and his band Kino / Cinema performed. Their greatest popularity was in the years 1987 to 1990, a time that was chiefly marked by Gorbachev's long winded speeches and promises of new freedoms and change. The Soviet people were caught in uncertainty and disbelief, and, as a result, hesitation enforced unadventurous lifestyles. People felt it was safer to adhere to traditional norms than to test out new freedoms they did not understand. This was an era of attempts at economic and social reforms, hesitant endeavors from the media to express new freedoms, a nuclear disaster, demonstrations of nationalism, denunciation of Stalinism, nuclear missile discussions, strikes, radical changes to the structure of government,[9] and the concluding events of the Afghanistan conflict. To understand the heroic ideal of the youth of this era is to catch a glimpse of the way in which this tumultuous time formed the hopes and wishes of a significant section of society.

Although the purpose of this paper is to analyze the notion of hero and not to provide a general history of rock music, the following brief overview of rock in the Soviet Union is necessary to establish a historical and musical context for the life of Tsoi. Since the 1950s, the Soviet Union had been slowly exposed to rock music

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[9] The Berlin Wall came down on 9 November 1989 as a result of the loss of power of the communist regime and the decision to permit the free flow of population into West Germany. Around the same time, Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Hungry replaced communist authorities and Romania witnessed a more violent end to the Ceaucescu regime. See for example, Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague* (New York: Random House, 1990).

through brief contacts with the West, such as athletes who returned to the country smuggling records with them. The official Soviet attitude was one of resistance to such music and attempts to harness or control rock development in the late 1960s. At that point, rock music (western originals and local imitations) was already an established underground second economy, yet much of Soviet rock was still a poor copy of the west, and sometimes used English sounds rather than actual language and lyrics. As a result, Soviets devotees preferred the original western genre.

In the late 1970s, Soviet rock musicians finally developed their own style –poetic text in the vernacular. Official attitudes had relaxed to acceptance of a rock culture, and some musicians were even granted official status under the cultural policy, which allowed for "vocal ensemble bands." Even so, most of the popular and engaging music was circulated through underground recordings (a phenomenon called *magnitizdat*). By the 1980s, intellectuals expressed sympathy for Soviet rock musicians in major literary journals. Intellectuals recognized rock because by this time, rock bands had linked themselves to existing literary traditions. The relationship between rock and the intellectual literary tradition was linked by the music, or rather guitar poetry, of the bard tradition. Bards were poets who sang their lyrics with simple accompaniment and provided a commentary on life that was often cynical, satirical and politically engaged. While there is no exact equivalent of this tradition in the west, comparisons may be made to the socially engaged music of Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan or Billy Bragg. Many Soviet rock musicians were fans of the bards so it was natural for them to adopt this socially charged tradition.

The uneasy relationship between authorities and amateur rock musicians is evidence of the impact of Soviet rock text on the state. The previous governments of

Yuri Andropov (leader from 1982 to 1983) and Konstantin Chernenko (1983 to 1985) had attacked rock, as it was deemed ideologically unacceptable. As a result, the Ministry of Culture focused its energy on the suppression of groups through blacklisting and threats of employment loss and jail terms in the years 1983-84. When Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the CC CPSU on 11 March 1985, he reversed many of these policies and even allowed Avtograf / Autograph, a popular older Soviet group, to perform at the Live Aid Concert during that same year. In the following year, he condoned the organization of other benefits by the music community, such as a benefit for the victims of Chernobyl. Eventually, even the exportation of Soviet rock to places such as India was permitted.[10] However, the general public, as well as important intellectuals and bureaucrats, still resisted rock. They compared the spread of rock culture to the spread of disease – most often the comparison was made to the Aids crisis, as both Aids and rock were perceived as moral and physical threats.[11] Letters from both sides of the rock war were commonly published in major newspapers and journals. Under Glasnost, an era proclaiming openness, rock could not be subjected to harsh crackdowns as the Party had proclaimed the need to study youth in order to encourage it to become exemplary future Soviet citizens. Taboos in other forms of media were already being expressed and so music should have the same freedoms. With anti-alcohol reforms, youth needed such diversions, and there was a developing interest in the "commercial

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[10] John Bushnell, *Moscow Graffiti: Language and Subculture* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990) , 77-78.

[11] Timothy W. Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) , 230.

potential of rock" under the "new profit conscious economic policy."[12] And so, by the time Viktor Tsoi walked into the Soviet rock scene, rock had become a developed social phenomenon and a recognized part of Soviet life.

Viktor Tsoi was born in Leningrad on 21 June 1962 to Russian physics instructor Valentina Vasil'evna and Korean-born engineer Robert Maksimovich Tsoi. He lived a fairly average childhood, going to school and facing the pressures of the eighth-grade career track placement that all Soviet youth had to face. His family wrote that as a young teen Viktor was thin and unattractive and an uncle even considered him to be "takoj shalopaj / a real bum."[13] As an artistically gifted child, he was admitted to the prestigious V. Serova Leningrad Art School in 1977. Tsoi continued to paint, draw and sculpt throughout his life, designing many of the album covers and documenting the rock community on canvas. In his early years he even produced drawings as a way to fund trips to Moscow.[14] Throughout his life, Tsoi was employed in various capacities: a factory worker, a bathhouse attendant, a night watchman, a stoker, a carpenter and even a restoration worker at various imperial palaces.

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[12] Artemy Troitsky, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia* (Winchester, MA: Faber and Faber, 1987) , 115-116.

[13] "Sem'ya Viktora Tsoya," *Gazeta Koryo*, 10 August 1991 in Vyacheslav Ogaj (editor), *Koryo Saram: Rozhdennyi na styke sozvezdii – V. Tsoi* (St. Petersburg: Koryo Saram, 1992) , 21.

[14] "Eskiz biokhroniki," in Ogaj, 22.

Viktor's participation in rock began at the age of twelve and his first group was called Palata No.6 / Ward No.6[15] with Maksim Pashkov. In the summer of 1981 he created the group Garin i Giperboloidy / Garin and Hyperboloids[16] with friends Aleksey Rybin and Oleg Valinski. The formation of informal leisure activities like rock bands was not uncommon as Komsomol[17] membership had dropped significantly by the early eighties to a mere 6.4%.[18] Youth were actively seeking alternative informal groups and rock music had become a major pastime. Unofficial rock culture had already produced a huge festival in Tbilisi in March 1980, which Russian rock critic Troitsky compared to Woodstock - but with judges![19]

At the time, informal rock groups were facing the constant problems of lack of practice spaces, scarcity of equipment, and the obstacle of obtaining permission

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[15] *Ward No.6* is the title of a well-known story about asylum patients and the role of chance in life, written in 1892 by the Russian writer Anton Chekhov (29 January 1860 to 15 July 1904). This choice of name for Tsoi's group is significant as it relates the importance of literature in Russian culture as well as the Soviet youth interest in topics of insanity and chance. In addition, much could be said on the connection of Chekhov's realism to Russian rock. Chekhov's stories involve internal rather than external action. However, this paper will not examine the choices of band names as a group's name is a collective effort and this paper's primary interest is the individual Tsoi.

[16] This name refers to the science fiction novel by Aleksej Tolstoy (10 January 1883 to 23 February 1945) entitled *The Hyperboloid of Engineer Garin* (1927). In this novel, the hero Garin invents a "hyperboloid" or ray gun to destroy crime. Science fiction and fantasy were important to many Soviet youth as they provided a way to escape into a separate inner life.

[17] The Komsomol was the official youth section of the Party and was responsible for organizing positive youth activity and practically all life affairs of youth ages 14-28 since its creation in 1918. It disbanded in 1991 prior to the fall of the Soviet Union.

[18] James Riordan, *Soviet Youth Culture* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1989) , 23; Wilson and Bachkatov, 127.

[19] Troitsky, *Back in the USSR,* 53.

to play concerts. In 1981 the city administration of Leningrad, along with other Soviet urban centers, had become adept at blocking informal performances. As a result, Leningrad musicians formed a community[20] and went to the Centre for Individual Amateur Performance to request permission to utilize the centre for practice and performance. The request was accepted on 7 March 1981.[21] This became the Leningrad Rock Club (LRC), a "cultural institution" during the eighties that provided over fifty amateur groups a forum for their music. This was a real forum for rock; regular concerts allowed fans to witness performances and annual rock festivals provided the opportunity for bands to be critiqued by journalists and official composers. It was a noble institution even though payment and more extrovert displays were not permitted, and equipment was still not available.[22]

Viktor Tsoi performed with his group Garin i giperboloidy at the LRC in the fall of 1981 and there met his future wife Marianna, whom he married in February

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[20] The "community" of rock musicians refers to the sense that these individuals shared a life philosophy and interest in rock music that united them together and carved out a separate existence. This community was like another world. Paul Easton suggested that rock bands formed "imagined communities" as an alternative to the Soviet organized public life. He wrote that in addition to the LRC, there was a café called Saigon in Leningrad which became an important centre; a place for rock musicians to exchange ideas in their common language – rock: Paul Easton, " The Rock Music Community," in *Soviet Youth Culture* ed. by James Riordan (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1989), 67. Thomas Cushman stated that the traditional "cult of friendship" was very much connected to the idea of rock community because music is a collectively made art form in which it is easy to form bonds of friendship on shared notions: Cushman, 165-170.

[21] Ryback, 213.

[22] Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 71-80.

1985. In 1982, he recorded his first album, called *45*, in Andrei Tropillo's studio.[23] In the spring Tsoi's band gave their first electric concert as Kino at the LRC, together with the hugely successful and equally legendary band Akvarium / Aquarium. In fact, the recording at Tropillo's studio and introduction to the LRC was made possible by the chance meeting at the metro between Tsoi and Boris Grebenshchikov, lead singer of Akvarium.

That same year, Kino toured Moscow and performed an acoustic concert. In February 1983, Kino gave a second concert at the LRC, and began recording a second album in the Little Drama Theatre. During the summer, Tsoi recorded a demo called *46* with fellow Kino member Yuri Kasparyan, completed in 1986. However, like all Soviet youth, Tsoi was required to fulfill his mandatory time in the army in the fall of 1983. Consequently, Tsoi voluntarily submitted himself to months of psychiatric testing at Psychiatric Hospital No. 2 in order to obtain his white ticket, the crucial document required for exemption from military duty. In 1984, during the spring, Kino entered the second LRC Festival and won a laureate. The band then recorded *Nachal'nik Kamchatki / Boss of Kamchatka* in Andrei Tropillo's studio with Akvarium. Kino, by this time an established group of musicians, consisted of: Tsoi, Yuri Kasparyan, Aleksandr Titov, and Grigorii Gur'yanov.

In the spring of 1985, Kino won another laureate at the LRC Festival. On 5 August 1985, Tsoi's son Sasha was born. As a father, Tsoi relished his new son, even

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[23] Tropillo's studio was an underground operation with recording done after hours using the facilities at the local youth centre where Tropillo worked. For descriptions of sound equipment available and the development of rock production see: Andrei Tropillo, interview by Y. B. Steinholt, 11 June 2002, at AnTrop studio and record plant, Ulitsa Tsvetochnaia, St. Petersburg, at www.hf.uib.no/i/russik/steinholt.rir_files.html.

though his married life with Marianna had slowly dissolved.[24] In June, while visiting with friends and providing entertainment at a private house party, Tsoi was arrested for this subversive behavior, and spent the night at the district administration of international affairs.[25] This attention from the authorities indicates that Tsoi was recognized as an important member of the rock community, as officials often picked out whom they considered leaders in order to make a strong example. Following his release, during that summer and in the coming fall, Tsoi recorded two albums: *Noch' / Night* with Andrei Tropillo and *Eto ne lyubov' / It's not love* at Vishni's studio.

In 1986, at the spring LRC festival, Tsoi won best text award for the song "Peremen / Change." A few months later, Viktor and Kino were filmed in the short student documentary about Soviet rock entitled *Konets kanikul / End of holiday* in Kyiv, Ukraine. Interestingly, the filming took place just months after the Chernobyl nuclear accident. In that same year, an American backed album entitled *Red Wave* was released in the United States and Kino was included as one of four Soviet rock groups chosen for American export by an aspiring American singer and rock promoter, Joanna Stingray. Tsoi also began work as a stoker in the now famous boiler room nicknamed "Kamchatka". In addition to being promoted in the West and gaining a romantic image in the boiler room, Tsoi's acting career took off with his involvement in the student films *Rok / Rock* and *Yia –Khkha / Ya-Ha*, and more significantly in the fall with his cameo in the cult classic film *Assa / Assa*[26] by director Sergei Solov'ev.

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[24] M. Tsoi, "Tochka otschyota," 35-37.

[25] Ibid, 28-29.

[26] "Assa" is not translatable. It is an exclamation when dancing.

In 1987, at the fifth LRC Festival, Kino won the best creative group prize. The band continued the recording of their new album *Gruppa krovi / Blood Group*, which had a few tracks recorded in 1986. In the fall, Viktor Tsoi acted in Rashid Nugmanov's new film *Igla / The Needle*. This film provided Tsoi with the freedom to create much of the hero's characterization and dialogue, and music, as Nugmanov esteemed Tsoi as a poet and not just as an actor.[27]

In 1988, Tsoi completed the recording for *Gruppa krovi* and the film *Igla*. He began recording *Zvezda po imeni 'solntse' / Star in the Name of the Sun.* He performed with Kino in the fall at a remembrance concert for Aleksandr Bashlachev, a young rock singer-songwriter admired by many in the community.[28] Unfortunately, a few excited fans broke some chairs resulting in the termination of the concert and a yearlong performance ban in the Moscow area for Tsoi and Kino; authorities at that time claimed that performers bore sole responsibility for the behavior of all spectators.[29] Tsoi's popularity reached its height during the years 1988 to 1989 and he performed approximately fifty-six concerts in cities like Volgograd, Sverdlovsk, Vitebsk, Minsk, Kharkiv, Alma-Ata, Krasnodar, Sochi, Krasnoyarsk, Moscow and

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[27] "Rashid Nugmanov: Bog vodel el ego rukoj," interview podgotovleno Genriettoj Kan, *Alma-Ata*, in Ogaj, 22-23.

[28] For more on Aleksandr Bashlachev see: Artemy Troitsky, "Little Bells Toll," Tusovka: *Who's Who in the New Soviet Rock Culture*, (London: Omnibus Press, 1990), 37-49; Y. V. Domanskij, "Poet: Aleksandr Bashlachev," *Teksty smerti russkogo roka*, Seminar Presentation in Tver', 2000, http://goldenunder.sakhaworld.org/books-r/domanski.htm#_ftn3, 4-23.

[29] Artur Gasparyan "On ne ishchet slavy," *Moskovskij komsomolets*, 26 October 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 239; Also see footage from concert on: "Kontsert pamyati Aleksandra Bashlacheva, Moskva, Luzhniki, 1988," in *Viktor Tsoi: Kinoproby posviashchenie*, (Moscow: Real Records and Tsoi/Moroz Records, 2001) DVD.

Leningrad, all at a time of an "overall drop in interest in rock groups and rock in the Soviet Union."[30] Kino was one of only a very few Soviet groups that consistently sold out concerts regardless of the city in which they were playing.[31]

In 1989, film critics awarded Tsoi the best actor of the year award for his performance in *Igla* at the film festival *Zolotoj Dyuk / The Golden Duke* in Odessa. That summer Kino was permitted to visit the US to promote *Red Wave*, as well as the film *Igla* at a film institute under the direction of Robert Redford.[32] According to Joanna Stingray the audience at these events enjoyed "Viktor's energy" but the music was lost on them.[33] Upon his return to Russia, Tsoi performed his last concert in Leningrad in November 1989.

During his last few years, Tsoi became the subject of increased international attention. In France a record was released called *Poslednij geroj / The Last Hero,* and in Japan, Tsoi signed a record contract in 1990. Tsoi even toured a little in Denmark, Italy and France. Overall, Tsoi's music did not transfer well onto the western market, as western rock music had higher recording standards, and the language barrier remained a great limitation to success.[34]

In June 1990 he performed his last concert in Moscow at the Lushniki stadium and toured the country while recording an album, posthumously entitled

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[30] Mikhail Sadchikov, "Zvevdi po imeni 'Kino'," *Antrakt,* N.1, 1990, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 241.

[31] Since 1987 rock musicians could be paid for performances: Gasparyan, 238.

[32] "Eskiz biokhroniki," in Ogaj, 42.

[33] Joanna Stingray, "U menya byl drug, ego zvali Viktor," *Moskovskij komsomolets,* August 1990, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 255.

[34] Sadchikov, "Zvevdi po imeni 'Kino'," 244-245.

Chyornyj al'bom / The Black Album. Shortly after Tsoi completed his tracks on the album, on 17 August 1990 the youth newspaper *Komsomolskaya pravda* reported that Tsoi had died as a result of a collision with a tour bus on 15 August. He was returning from a fishing trip near Yurmala, Latvia and supposedly he fell asleep at the wheel.[35] The paper then went on to state:

> For the younger generation of our country Tsoi means more than any of the political leaders, celebrities and writers . . ..
> Every song of Tsoi's – is a song of love or about freedom. The eternal songs – because they have stunning beauty and because of love and freedom we can never get enough. So Tsoi remains with us – and these are not empty words.
> And already... – now – he is a legend.[36]

Other media, including radio, announced the news of Viktor Tsoi's death as a significant event but there was "no retrospective or analysis of his place in Russian cultural history or of his significance as one of the most prominent icons in the history of Russian popular culture."[37] This may indicate that the state and general society were still reluctant to acknowledge this particular kind of hero, which exemplified individualism.

Literature on Tsoi's life and music is limited, but a rather extensive collection of documents including lyrics, news articles, interviews and remembrances of fans and those in the rock community, does exist in a book edited by his widow Marianna

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[35] While there was some initial speculation that the Soviet government murdered Tsoi, it passed as his friends did not believe that he was so desirable to remove: M. Tsoi, "Tochka otschyota," 37. The mystery of his death became more connected to rumours of aliens, and the possibility of still living (much like the legend around Elvis Presley). The problem of the "unsuitability" of accidental death in relation the heroic myth is examined in Y. V. Domanskij, 29-30.

[36] *Komsomolskaya pravda* (Moscow) , 17 August 1990.

[37] Cushman, 162.

Tsoi and rock journalist Aleksandr Zhitinskij[38]. Books from *samizdat'* (independent underground publications) some of which contain reprinted articles, letters and pictures are also available. [39] A few dedicated pages to Tsoi exist in general histories of Soviet rock music and articles on rock community and youth life. Yuri Domanskij provides perhaps the most recent exploration of Tsoi and the creation of the mythic hero in *Texts of Death in Russian Rock.*[40] The Korean Journal *Koryo Saram / Korean People* issued an important publication in 1992, solely dedicated to Viktor Tsoi; the publication provided a description of Tsoi's family background, reprinted articles from the press and numerous photos of Tsoi, his memorial sites and reproductions of his art. There are numerous websites dedicated to Viktor Tsoi, but for the purpose of this paper, utilization of these sites was kept to a minimum, as many contain copies of material already available from the M. Tsoi / Zhitinskij collection or materials limited to current fan exaltation of Tsoi: the latter are more useful for a study of the fans themselves or of Soviet rock nostalgia. Footage of concerts, interviews and

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[38] Tsoi and Zhitinskij, eds. *Viktor Tsoi: stikhi, dokumenty, vospominaniya.*

[39] Aleksandr Zhitinskij, *Puteshestvie rok-diletanta: muzykal'nyi roman* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1990); Sergei Gur'ev, ed., *Zolotoe podpol'e 1967-1994* (Nizhnij Novgorod: Dekom, 1994).

[40] Domanskij , 24-44. The direction to study Tsoi as a hero is indebted to Domanskij's work. Domaskij provides an important view on the role of death in creating legends. He connects four personalities of the Soviet Rock community of the 1980s to the Romantic tradition. While Domanskij explores the creation of Tsoi as a legend and the important role of death in that creation, this work focuses on defining Tsoi's own heroic philosophy during his life, rather than his myth. This study aims at finding how the living Tsoi met a heroic ideal, and what made his songs significant as a way of life rather than how his audience enshrined him after his death.

other clips can be found on DVD or CD-Rom collections.[41] Sergei Solovev's film *Assa*[42] and Rashid Nugamov's film *Igla*[43] are available but analysis of these films was kept to a minimum, as this work's primary concern is the philosophy of the hero Tsoi as found in his music – the form most available to his public.

As for the body of literature on Soviet rock music, the relationship between art and historical reality has been slow to develop. Most of the literature describes only the historical development of rock[44], with the exception of Cushman's sociological approach[45]. Consequently, in order to pursue the way in which the notion of hero is shaped from a philosophy found in rock music, it was necessary to reach past general historical works that relate the significant political and social events of the Gorbachev era and delve into the realms of literary and social theories. Of special note is the above-noted literary analysis of the significance of death in the making of Soviet rock legends by Yuri Domanskij. This work reveals the significant connection between literatury traditions and Soviet rock with particular emphasis on Viktor Tsoi. Crucial to my analysis were Vladimir Golstein's understanding of

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[41] *Viktor Tsoi: Kinoproby posviashchenie*, (Moscow: Real Records and Tsoi/Moroz Records, 2001) DVD; *Chelovek v chyornom*, (Moscow: Sozdannuyu tvorcheskoj gruppoj "A-TATA",1990-91) CD-Rom.

[42] *Assa*, Dir. Sergei Solovev, 1987.

[43] *Igla*, Dir. Rashid Nugmanov, 1988.

[44] The most popular Soviet rock histories are: Timothy W. Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union;* and Artemy Troitsky, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia.* Smaller and more specific histories can be found in: Paul Easton, " The Rock Music Community," in *Soviet Youth Culture*; and Atremy Troitsky, *Tusovka: Who's Who in the New Soviet Rock Culture.*

[45] Thomas Cushman, *Notes From Underground: Rock Music Counterculture in Russia.*

Lermontov's heroic type,[46] Katerina Clark's examination of the soviet novel and the "ritualization of history,"[47]William Mills Todd III's sociology of literature,[48] Simon Frith's research on the relationship between music and identity,[49] John Bushnell's study on graffiti and identity,[50] Yngvar Steinholt's introduction to cognitive poetics,[51] Andrew Tolston's study on personality and media, [52] and David P. Marshall's monograph on celebrity and power.[53]

Of special methodical importance to this study was Mikhail Bakhtin's theory on dialogism, which provided a way to examine Tsoi's lyrics. Bakhtin's theory suggests that language is a social phenomenon, whereby a constant dialogue between multiple voices (jargon, everyday speech, dialects, generational language,

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[46] Vladimir Golstein, *Lermontov's Narratives on Heroism* (Evanston. Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1998).

[47] Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel, History as Ritual*, 3rd ed. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000).

[48] William Mills Todd III, *Literature and Society in Imperial Russia, 1800-1914* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1978) ; William Mills Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986).

[49] Simon Frith, "Music and Identity," Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage Publications, 1996) , 108-127.

[50] John Bushnell, *Moscow Graffiti: Language and Subculture* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990).

[51] Yngvar B. Steinholt, "Cognitive Poetics in the Analysis of popular Music: A New Approach to song lyrics?" Paper for IASPM 2005 Rome, at www.hf.uib.no/i/russik/steinholt.rir_files.html

[52] Andrew Tolston, *Mediations: Text and Discourse in Media Studies* (New York: Arnold, 1996).

[53] P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

scientific language, etc) is present and heard against a variety of contexts (preexisting symbols, viewpoints, utterances, etc.) and as such provides meaning beyond literary value.[54] Therefore, because dialogism is part of the process of creating understanding, it can be used to comprehend how meaning is created and consequently how history unfolds. By examining the voices and contexts present in Tsoi's work, it is possible to hear a dialogue between cultures and subcultures and therefore learn what a particular subculture of youth valued as its ideal and why that ideal persists to this day. In so doing, we can witness the "ritual of history," because what Tsoi offers is not a new philosophy or simply a foreign philosophy, but a heroic image that relies on the inclusion of multiple voices – three of which are the greater Russian literary tradition, rooted specifically in Lermontov's vision, the existing Soviet notions of hero, and thirdly music traditions (bard music, Soviet patriotic rock and western punk).

The importance of the role of the word, both written and verbal, in Russian culture cannot be overstressed. Russian literature has traditionally acted as a forum for the newest ideas and as a witness to the reality of life.[55] Writers are considered spiritual leaders.[56] After all, this is a culture whose greatest hero is the writer Aleksandr Pushkin. From the start of the Great Russian literary tradition, language has been touted as having a significant role on the formation of social life. In

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[54] Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel," in Michael Holquist (ed.), Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (trans.) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1992).

[55] Clark, 12.

[56] Andrei Melville and Gail W. Lapidus, eds., *The Glasnost Papers: Voices on Reform from Moscow* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1990), 33.

addition, the emphasis of Russian rock musicians on text stresses the significance of the word in Russian tradition. Viktor Tsoi himself acknowledged that rock music was attractive in the Soviet Union because it was not a borrowed phenomenon; it was the "mass art of the people" and as a social phenomenon music has the power to help real problems.[57] In 1818, the great writer and academic N. M Karamzin said, "Language and literature are not merely means of mass enlightenment, they are the principal means."[58] Recognizing this fact makes it very easy to believe the deep connection between ideology and literature and that this relationship is part of the ritual of history.

The following work is firstly a study on the relationship between art and historic reality, examining in particular how Viktor Tsoi was defined as a hero during the Glasnost era and what the resulting notion of hero indicates about that era's historic and social realities. Secondly, this examination of the notion of a hero results in a realization that an individualistic rock star is connected to the Russian tradition; it uncovers a history of unresolved tension between the individual and the collective, and suggests that the notion of hero is ritualistic. Having begun our exploration of hero with the first written definitions it follows to explore the first literary examples. In the first chapter, the works and person of Lermontov will be compared with Tsoi's

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[57] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Argumenty i fakty*, No. 39, 1987 in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 198.

[58] As quoted in: Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin*, 37.

lyrics and image.[59] Viktor Tsoi shares Lermontov's vision of individual freedom and artistic sensibility. The notion of the hero's image, the hero as an individual in his time is central to this chapter. In the second chapter, it is necessary to look at how the Soviet ideals revised the traditional notions of hero. Tsoi will be revealed to be the hero who follows the Soviet heroic formula based on oral and religious traditions. Again Tsoi's works will be compared to literature, but this time to the early Soviet writer Gladkov. This is an interesting comparison because it illuminates how heroic symbols are reworked, how Tsoi is connected to the conventions of his time, and how unstable historic reality creates heroes. The notion of a hero's historical context is central to this chapter. In the last chapter, we move past literary notions to possible musical sources of the heroic ideal. Here Tsoi is the honest social commentator. His philosophy is compared to traditional bard, Russian patriotic rock and western punk philosophies. The notions of a hero's audience and the hero's philosophy are central to this chapter. The resulting work therefore encompasses the hero as individual, the hero's time and the hero's audience, providing a history of individual resistance and the connection of such creative resistance to the Russian tradition. The argument progresses from primary definitions to evolving literary examples and finally to musical traditions encompassing Russian, Soviet and Western influences.

This work is primarily based on a detailed analysis of Tsoi's lyrics and music in historical context. These lyrics and the way they have been expressed are

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[59] The comparison between Tsoi and Lermontov is logical as Lermontov provides the first significant Russian literary explorations of a hero in his sole book *Hero of Our Time*. In addition, Lermontov has been acknowledged as an important example of Russian romanticism and Viktor Tsoi has shared this particular title of romantic. Domanskij compares Tsoi lyrical text and image to Romanticism and in particular to Lermontov: Domanskij, 28, 31, 36-37, 43.

significant because they were and are the main way Tsoi's philosophy of life reach his fans, which is something he himself expressed in an interview.[60] Within the lyrics are themes that correspond with various notions of the heroic tradition. Studying these rock songs provides a case study of the relationship between cultural communication and historical reality. This focus on the importance of art is rooted in Tsoi's own philosophy that all film, music and painting are ways to have dialogue with the masses; they are all ways to share and distribute understanding.[61] Newspaper articles and interviews with Tsoi and members of the LRC community, as well as reprinted materials from *samizdat'* publications and concert footage were also examined.

Parallel translation has been used on all lyrics and poetry to provide the reader with a sense of lyrical quality and original impact. At other times English only translations were used to keep the work compact and to enable ease of reading. Translations are the work of the author unless otherwise acknowledged. Transliteration, as in table 1, was consistently used to render Russian language into Romanized characters. Familiar Russian names and words in common English use were kept in their most popular Romanized forms.

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[60] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Argumenty i fakty*, No. 39, 1987, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 198.

[61] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Novyj fil'm*, Alma-Ata, March 1988, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 201.

Table 1. Transliteration Guide

Russian	English transliteration	Russian	English transliteration
а	a	п	p
б	b	р	r
г	g	с	s
д	d	т	t
е	e	у	u
ё	yo	ф	f
ж	zh	ц	ts
з	z	ш	sh
и	i	щ	shch
й	j	ы	y
к	k	ь	'
л	l	э	e
м	m	ю	yu
н	n	я	ya
о	o		

Chapter 1

The Romantic: Sharing Lermontov's Heroic Philosophy

Soviet rock star Viktor Tsoi was once asked what was most important to him. "To preserve internal freedom" was his answer.[1] About 150 years before Tsoi, the great Romantic Russian poet Mikhail Lermontov wrote, "I will not give up my freedom for the sake of a delusion."[2] Both cultural figures express the value and need for individual freedom and resistance in uncertain social realities. Through their acquaintance with the works and images of these two men many Soviet youth continued to be fascinated by Lermontov's romantic hero type as found in the similar heroic philosophy of Viktor Tsoi.[3] This hero values the worth of the individual above all; stirring up an internal uneasiness that forces one to choose an independent path of resistance rather than continued conformity. This hero is portrayed as a rational thinker in an irrational world; someone who is able to survive through the development of an internal creative life, consciously choosing to resist lies and a mediocre existence. This love for the strong independent type reveals that the

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[1] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Sovetskaya molodezh'* Riga 6 May 1989, in Marianna Tsoi and Aleksandr Zhitinskij, eds., *Viktor Tsoi: stikhi, dokumenty, vospominaniya* (St. Petersburg: Novi Helikon, 1991) , 207.

[2] As quoted in Vladimir Golstein, *Lermontov's Narratives on Heroism* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1998) , 123.

[3] As noted in the Introduction, Domanskij's work is grounded on the connection of Soviet Rock of the 1980s to Romanticism, on the basis of the continuance of the romantic beautification and desirability of death. He provides reference to Lermontov as a possible lyrical connection to Tsoi. Chapter 1 builds off of Domanskij's initial idea of a relationship between Tsoi and Lermontov and draws out specific points of comparison, rather than Domanskij's more specialized focus on death and creation of legends.

enduring struggle of a nation under years of servitude, with its traditional value of collective, still had not resolved the conflict between the personal and the public.

Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov was born in Moscow on 2 October 1814. Due to the early death of his mother, Maria Mikhailovna, Lermontov spent most of his childhood under the guidance of his maternal grandmother, and subsequently was reared by private tutors, boarding and military schools. He was highly cultured and began to write as a teenager, but it was not until he wrote "Smert' poeta / The Poet's Death" in 1837 that he attained literary notice. This poem was Lermontov's attack on a society that he felt was responsible for Aleksandr Pushkin's death by duel. Although duels were illegal, the rules of social etiquette made it difficult for a man to refuse such a confrontation. Lermontov was exiled to the Caucasus for a few months as a result. On his return from exile, Lermontov became a participant in literary circles. However, within two years Lermontov was again exiled, this time ironically for participation in a duel. However, he continued to write both poetry and prose and, despite his exile, he had authorization from a censor to publish his novel *Geroj nashego vremeni / Hero of Our Time.*

Lermontov was an intriguing figure in social life. He never sought out publishers or patronage for his works, and he openly defied government authority by such pranks as wearing a toy sword in a military parade and by neglecting to report to his commanding officer after exile.[4] These actions, considering how rigidly conformist Tsar Nikolai I was, reveal Lermontov's fiercely independent will.

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[4] William Mills Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986) , 137.

On 13 July 1841, military colleague N. S. Martynov killed Lermontov in a duel. It is unclear what provoked such a confrontation; however, biographies stress the joyous reaction of the Tsar regarding the news of Lermontov's death. There has been, and still is great variance among ideological interpretations of Lermontov's literary work. Thus he is often uneasily categorized as a romantic poet or the first realist. However, he is consistently regarded as a great poet and his writings were extensively studied as classic studies in Soviet schools.

Romanticism, in its varied forms, was a popular literary style and social phenomenon during Lermontov's lifetime. While it has been a continual problem for literary theorists to define romanticism, a high degree of subjectivity and individualist ideals, or the "cult of the individual," are consistently associated with this phenomenon and style.[5] Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this individualistic characteristic provoked a debate on whether romanticism was a positive or negative movement. This anxiety over romanticism demonstrates that Russia was reluctant to value the individual.

The problem of romanticism also reveals recognition of the relationship between art and ideology, and that the influence of the written word on reality and vice versa was not to be taken lightly. I. F. Volkov believed that the "emergence of the romantic consciousness" coincided with "unstable social conditions."[6] Indeed the context of volatile time is a major factor in the shaping of Lermontov's and Tsoi's

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[5] Robert Reid, "Russian theories of Romanticism" in Robert Reid ed. *Problems of Russian Romanticism* (Brookfield, Vermont: Gower Publishing Company Limited, 1986) , 8-9; Sigrid McLaughlin, "Russia / Romanicheskij – Romanticheskij – Romantizm" in Hans Eichner Ed., *'Romantic' and Its Cognates / The European History of a Word* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972) , 453.

[6] As quoted in Reid, 6.

heroic ideals. William Mills Todd III describes the nineteenth century as one, which "confront[ed] in mere decades . . . problems that Western cultures had been addressing. . . over the course of several centuries."[7] This development is similar to the period of Glasnost in the speed at which society had to deal with extreme change.

The historic reality of Lermontov was primarily marked by the Decembrist uprising of 14 December 1825. This uprising was the attempt of a group of aristocrats to overthrow the newly crowned Tsar Nikolai I. Under the previous reign of Aleksandr I, the values of the Western enlightenment and the fairly liberal reforms encouraged hopes for greater changes. However, war with Napoleon and the following rebellions of 1812 changed the focus of the Tsar's reign to quelling all uprisings and suppressing individual freedoms. This sudden governmental shift, left many disillusioned and thirsting for further reform.[8] The resulting failure of the Decembrists ended with between sixty to seventy rebels shot on the spot, five members hanged and over 300 men sentenced to hard labor. The Decembrists' main criticism of Imperial Russia was the "lack of security and respect for the individual, his honor, his property, his work, and even his life."[9] The Imperial government tradition was one that desired and created tools instead of individuals; people were

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[7] Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin*, 2.

[8] Aleksandr Bestuzhev, "Extract From a Letter of A. Bestuzhev to Nicholas I", as reprinted in Thomas Riha (ed.), *Readings in Russian Civilization Volume II: Imperial Russia 1700-1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969) , 299.

[9] Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin*, 41.

to become solely dependent on the government and the power of the individual was to be suppressed.[10] Government power was dependent on retaining the status quo.

Russia has a long tradition of valuing the collective over the individual. The teachings of the Orthodox faith define the original sin as the transgression of the individual choosing knowledge above God, resulting in dismissal from Eden and separation of the community, stressing that in God's original paradise people were meant to remain connected and not separated.[11] This traditional view continued after Lermontov's death. In the 1840s and 1850s the Slavophile[12] ideology developed the following line of thought:

> [U]nity, integrity (tsel'nost'), organicity, fullness (polnota), and brotherhood would be associated with positive and Orthodox values; autonomy, separation, property, self, rationality, law, and the impersonal collective with demonic and Western ones . . . individualism in Russia was damned before it even appeared.[13]

This tension between individual and collective or government power created a very fragile culture, as society increasingly dealt with life through the means of hypocrisy and self-deception.[14]

Pushkin, the most significant Russian cultural icon, recognized the growing need to exert independence from such a power-hungry government. He wrote, "Only independence and self-esteem can lift us above the trifles of life and the storms of

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[10] Golstein, 12-13.

[11] Ibid, 16.

[12] The Slavophiles were a group of intellectuals who believed in the special spiritual role of the Slavic peoples and the Orthodox Church.

[13] Golstein, 17.

[14] Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin*, 4.

fate."[15] Lermontov's novel, *Geroj nashego vremeni / Hero of Our Time* furthered the cause of the individual by attempting to work out how to exercise freedom in a society that had increasingly grown hostile to any demonstration of independence.[16]

The problem of the individual and the resulting social fragility is similar to Tsoi's historic era. Soviet rule in the course of over sixty years had done much to continue the demonization of individualism. This suppression of the individual is evident in the changing of the language. After the Revolution, language was subjected to a course of reforms, resulting in the alteration of meaning and creating a mode of expression that made it difficult to exert the personal.[17] The new Soviet language became characterized by depersonalized impersonal constructions. This meant official language used more nouns than verbs, the use of third person rather than first and the use of reflexive verbs to avoid the nominative case. Thus language itself created a system in which people were immersed in expression of the public value over the individual. This language allowed a high degree of generalization that easily glossed over bureaucratic error and responsibility. Language left little room for the individual.

Just like their nineteenth century counterparts, Soviet intellectuals rationalized that "individuality" was positive but only if it was not Western

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[15] Pushkin (XII, 81) as quoted in Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin*, 108.

[16] Golstein, 23.

[17] Larisa Najdich, *Sled na peske,Ocherki o russkom yazykovom uzuse* (St. Petersburg: Sanktpeterburgskij gosudarstvennyj universitet, 1995) , 20-91; S. Medvedev, *SSSR: Dekonstruktsiya teksta* (Moscow: Argus, 1995) , 313-346.

individualism.[18] The separation of the Western concept of individuality as uniqueness is possible as the Russian language differentiates between two concepts that are both translated as the English "individual." These terms are: firstly, *lichnost'*, which pertains more to the actual person or soul of the individual and, secondly, *individ* which connotes the physical individual.[19] It follows that the correct *lichnost'* is one that is in line and shaped by the ruling state; there is no room for a personal individual. Under Soviet rule *lichnost'* was a person's Soviet social and political identity as a communist.[20] Consequently, the Soviet program denied individual reality, instead focusing on the teaching of ideals.

This didactic focus on idealism and the rejection of the individual, created an indifference to politics for many youth.[21] What had worked in the context of revolution and war now began to be questioned. As early as the 1970s, youth valued the individual over the state and questioned the ideal of sacrifice and collectivism.[22]

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[18] Golstein, 5-6.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Thomas Cushman, *Notes From Underground: Rock Music Counterculture in Russia* (USA: State University of New York, 1995) , 143-144.

[21] James Riordan, ed., *Soviet Youth Culture* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1989) , 32.

[22] Natalie Gross, "Youth and the Army in the USSR in the 1980s," in *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (July, 1990) : 484.

Youthful life was filled with sarcastic jokes regarding the old state heroes,[23] and in their search for new leaders there was an "emphasis on the inner lives."[24]

The habitual suppression of the individual within the new context of openness constructed a very dangerous cultural fragility in the late 1980s. Gorbachev's proposed changes had deeper effects than the purely economical; Glasnost proposed a redefinition of the "social contract between the individual, the society, and the state."[25] Conflicts emerged between those who wished to keep the status quo and those who ventured to challenge it by testing out the new freedoms.

Just as the erosion of the old Soviet social system marked Tsoi's era, Lermontov's age had come to a cultural breaking point with the loss of mutual values and the threat of the individual. In a time with no shared communal values it is difficult to have consensus on who or what a hero is.[26] In Lermontov's age, society was equally fragmented as evidenced by the Decembrist uprising, and in the appeal of Romanticism, an art form which was so varied it was difficult to agree on its definition and effect. People held a variety of values and thus there was an overabundance of heroes,[27] which perhaps met cultural expectations but could not gratify the culture's true need. Vladimir Golstein suggests that Lermontov provided

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[23] Paul Easton, "The Rock Music Community" in Riordan, ed., *Soviet Youth Culture*, 60.

[24] Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel, History as Ritual*, 3rd ed. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000) , 240.

[25] Andrei Melville and Gail W. Lapidus, ed., *The Glasnost Papers: Voices on Reform From Moscow* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1990) , 13.

[26] Golstein, 193.

[27] Ibid.

that era with a hero that met these precise needs, a hero that dealt with the problems of their time, a hero that exemplified individualistic freedom.[28] Golstein's monograph describes Lermontov as "not just a renowned Romantic poet" but as "a serious social and ethical thinker who explored with sympathy and understanding the liberating as well as tragic dimensions of heroism and individualism."[29] This is similar to William Mills Todd III's view that Lermontov's hero in *Hero of Our Time* is acutely aware how the social constraints of his era shape the hero's identity, creating a hero that explores the problem of individual identity.[30] Both authors argue that Lermontov's heroes are not really superfluous because they are connected to social conventions; they know them and sometimes even abide by them.[31] However, Golstein goes beyond limiting the hero to a reflection of his time by providing an understanding that Lermontov's heroes have a self-sustaining philosophy of a rational hero in an irrational world, overcoming his harsh or uncertain reality through creative resistance rather than rebellion.

Similar to Lermontov, Viktor Tsoi is frequently labeled a romantic,[32] yet at the

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[28] Ibid, 1.

[29] Ibid, 2.

[30] Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin,* 142, 161.

[31] Golstein, 111; Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin*, 204.

[32] Feliks Aksentsev, "Den' v 'Kino'," Zhurnal *Rodnik*, No.10, 1988 in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 221;Nikolaj Mejnert, "Tri vzglyada na 'Kino'," *Reklama* (k gazette *Vechernij Tallinn*) , 28 August 1985 in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 212; Mikhail Shlyamovich, "Interesnoe 'Kino' Viktora Tsoya i ego povoroty," *Sovetskaya Estoniya*, 6 January 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 229; Sergej Sholokhov, "Igla v stogue sena," *Sovetskij ekran*, No.9, 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 233; Aleksandr Zhitinskij, *Puteshestvie rok-diletanta: muzykal'nyi roman* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1990) , 344, 345.

same time as someone who states simple rational truth,[33] unlike the traditional romantic who is highly irrational and fatalistic.[34] Instead of emotional poetic glossiness, Tsoi and Lermontov's heroes reject drama and falsities and instead provide "bitter medicines and harsh truths".[35] Like Lermontov, Tsoi may be considered as a similarly dedicated social thinker, sharing Lermontov's individualistic philosophy.

Efforts to use a variety of both Tsoi's songs and Lermontov's writings from various dates were used in order to provide a more inclusive analysis and to prove that Tsoi parallels Lermontov's philosophy of an irrational word, a rational hero and internal freedom through art. Both Tsoi and Lermontov recognize that the world is irrational and is full of chance, and more specifically they have a keen sense of the falsity of their own time, each seeing his own society as possessing institutions which enforce mediocrity, meaninglessness and counterfeit hope. Their goal is to reveal truth. This exposure of an irrational world is the first characteristic of the heroic philosophy. Both Golstein and Todd III assert that the Lermontov's

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[33] Evgenij Dodolev, "Nachal'nik 'Kamchatki'," *Moskovskij Komsomolets*, 25 March1988 in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 217; Mikhail Shlyamovich, "Interesnoe 'Kino' Viktor Tsoya i ego povoroty," 228; Artemy Troitsky, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia* (Winchester, MA: Faber and Faber, 1987) , 79; Mikhail Borzykin, interview by Y. B. Steinholt, 22 September 2001, St. Petersburg, at www.hf.uib.no/i/russik/steinholt.rir_files.html, 4.

[34] There are still many interpretations of Lermontov as a traditional Romantic fatalist. It is important to note that Golstein's interpretation provides an alternative perspective. While Golstein acknowledges that Lermontov's texts reveal an interest in death and even heroic embracing of death, his analysis reveals that unlike traditional Romantics Lermontov is not overwhelmed by the problems of fate or in contemplation of an ideal. His heroes seem to mock the romantic world's fatalistic ideal.

[35] Mikhail Lermontov, "Author's Preface," Hero *of Our Time* (Toronto, ON: Penguin Books Canada Ltd., 1966) , 20.

descriptions of the hero's environment are significant and accurate social criticisms of Lermontov's historic time.[36] In 1829 Lermontov wrote the following poem entitled "Monolog / A Monologue":

Pover', nichtozhestvo est' blago v zdeshnem svete.
K chemu glubokie poznan'ya, zhazhda slavy,
Talant i pylkaya lyubov' svobody,
Kogda my ikh upotrebit' ne mozhem?
My, deti severa, kak zdeshnie rasten'ya,
Tsvetem nedolgo, bistro uvyadaem...
Kak solntse zimnee na serom neboskIone,
Tak pasmurna zhizn' nasha. Tak nedolgo
Eyo odnoobraznoe techen'e...
I dushno kazhetsya na rodine,
I serdtsu tyazhko, i dusha toskuet...
Ne znaya ni lyubvi, ni druzhby sladkoj,
Sred' bur' pustykh tomitsya yunost' nasha,
I bistro zloby yad eyo mrachit,
I nam gor'ka ostyloj zhizni chasha;
I uzh nichto dushi ne veselit. [37]

Yes, mediocrity among us is a blessing.
What use are pride in deeper knowledge, lust for glory,
Unflinching love of liberty, and talent,
If in our world not one of us can use them!
We, children of the north, like native blossoms,
Burst into bloom, to wilt and wither quickly...
So like the winter sun against a gray horizon
Is our lack luster life! Its tedious progress
Is equally monotonous and gloomy...
We seem to stifle in our Motherland;
The heart is heavy, and the soul is tortured...
Not knowing love, not knowing joys of friendship,
We spend our youth in foolish tempests pining;
By malice driven to the very brink,
We see our warmth and merriment declining,
And bitterness of life is all we drink.[38]

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[36] Golstein, 54-55; Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin*, 147.

[37] Mikhail Lermontov, "Monolog," in Anatoly Liberman, trans. *Mikhail Lermontov: Major Poetical Works* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983) , 34.

[38] Mikhail Lermontov, "A Monologue", in Ibid, 35.

This poem, written just a few years into the reign of Nikolai I, indicates that Russia had little to offer the young generation. Anatoly Liberman points out that this theme later appears in the more mature 1838 poem "Duma / Meditation:"[39]

Pechal'no ya glyazhu na nashepokoleni'e!
Ego gryadushchee – il' pusto, ul' temno,
Mezh tem, pod bremenem poznnan'ya i somnen'ya,
V bezdejstvii sostaritsya ono.
Bogaty my, edva iz kolybeli,
Oshibkami otsov i pozdnim ikh umom,
I zhizn' uzh nas tomit, kak rovnyj put' bez tseli,
Kak pir na prazdnike chuzhom.
K dobru u zlu postydno ravnodushny,
V nachale poprishcha my vyanem bez bor'by;
Pered opasnost'yu pozorno-malodushny,
I pered vlastiyu – prezrennye raby.
Tak toshchij plod, do vremeni sozrelyj,
Ni veka nashego ne raduya, ni glaz,
Visit mezhdu tsvetov, prishlets osirotelyj,
I chas ikh krasoty – ego paden'ya chas!

My issushili um naukoyu besplodnoj,
Taya zavistlivo ot blizhnikh i druzej
Nadezhdy luchshie i golos blagorodnyj
Neveriem osmeyannykh strastej.
Edva kasalis' my do chashi naslazhden'ya,
No yunikh sil my tem ne sberegli;
Iz kazhdoj radosti, boyasya presyshchen'ya,
My luchshnij sok naveki izvlekli.

Mechty poezii, sozdanniya iskusstva
Vostorgom sladostnym nash um ne shevelyat;
My zhadno berezhem v grudi ostatok chuvstva –
Zarytyj skupost'yu i bespoleznyj klad.
I nenavidim my, i lyubim my sluchajno,
Nichem ne zhertvuya ni zlobe, ni lyubvi,
I tarstvuet v dushe kakoj-to kholod tajnyj,
Kogda ogon' kipit v krovi.
I predkov skuchny nam roskoshnye zabavy,
Ikh dobrosovetnyj, rebyacheskij razvrat;
I k grobu my speshim bez schast'ya i bez slavy,
Glyadya nasmeshlivo nazad.

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[39] Anatoly Liberman "Commentary", in Ibid, 520.

Tolpoj ugryumoyu i skoro pozabytoj
Nad mirom my projdyom bez shuma i sleda,
Ne brosivshi vekam ni mycli plodovitoj,
Ni geniem nachatogo truda.
I prakh nash, s strogost'yu sud'i i grazhdanina,
Potomok oskorbit prezritel'nym stikhom,
Nasmeshkoj gor'koyu obmanutogo syna
Nad promotavshimsya otstom. [40]

Oh, sadly do I view the present generation
With its unpromising and uninspiring growth!
Oppressed by heavy doubts and sterile education,
It ages fast in idleness and sloth.
Upon us all our fathers have been pouring
The warnings of the weak and wisdom's late behests;
The life that faces us is long and deadly boring-
A banquet for unbidden guests.
We wither young, submissive and unhardened;
Good does not bring us joy, nor evil bring remorse.
By danger instantly, ingloriously disheartened,
We are obsequious slaves of every frowning force.
A fruit hangs so sometimes in early summer,
Precocious, thin, offensive to the eye and taste,
Among the blossoms hid, a pitiful newcomer,
By nature's triumph, by autumn's yield disgraced.

We study useless things, unpractical and arid,
But deep within, from everybody locked,
We keep nobler hopes and have since childhood carried
The voice of passions ridiculed and mocked.
We touched the cup of ecstasy with trepidation
And thought to put our strength to better use;
And every joy we've had, afraid of satiation,
We've robbed forever of its precious juice.

[40] Mikhail Lermontov, "Duma", in Ibid, 146, 148.

The dreams of poetry have ceased to give us pleasure,
We are indifferent to genius and to art,
But miser-like we guard our last and worthless treasure,
The relics of the warmth once buried in the heart.
We even hate by chance, and love will seldom bless us,
For we are loath to risk for love's or hatred's sake.
Some ruthless, secret frost congeals our soul's recesses,
When burning passions are at stake.
Our fathers' daring sins make insipid story.
Those sumptuous revelries, that studied, childish lust!
The road we slowly tread has neither joy nor glory,
And yesterday is simply dust.

A mirthless, sullen crowd, by people soon forgotten,
We'll vanish from this world without a noise or trace,
Without a masterpiece by miracle begotten,
Or anything to save the human race.
When judged by better men and offspring coming after,
We all shall be condemned in a derisive verse;
We'll quit like spendthrifts 'mid disdainful laughter
And take with us our children's curse.[41]

According to the young mocking lyrics of Lermontov, the world that his generation finds itself in has little to offer, it is a world of slavery and stagnation. The poem was written shortly before Lermontov was exiled for writing his poem "Smert' poeta" in 1837. It seems that either the introduction or the end of the poem, or both, were considered too "arrogant," and contained too much "shameless freethinking, more than criminal," according to the statement of the Tsarist police.[42] Expressing a personal opinion was considered criminal dissent and so people were forced into obedience and subjection.

This is very similar to the picture Viktor Tsoi creates in many of his songs. There is no meaningful outlet for youth and like Lermontov's generation they are

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[41] Mikhail Lermontov, "Meditation," in Ibid, 147, 149.

[42] Count Benckendorff, chief of secret police, as quoted in Ibid, 507.

regarded with suspicion if they pursue paths outside the system, such as rock music. Tsoi said:

> You'll agree, that it's very strange, when you write songs, in which there is nothing seditious, but they are received ... as abomination....It's strange, when you know, that you're able to work, and you are living, yet they don't acknowledge you and they form a view of you, that you're not part of the natural world. But in reality you are a simply an "other", not like everything they're used to, ... And for this they exclude you from their field of sight. This, I think, would be impossible in another country. I think this is characteristic only for us.[43]

Like Lermontov's, his generation is bound to conform as rebellion provides little reward. Tsoi's generation is faced with a system that promotes mediocrity and the "study [of] useless things." The original Russian "naukoyu besplodnoj" means "fruitless or infertile science;" it is a barren education. An example of such barren education is found in Tsoi's song "Alyuminievye ogurtsy / Aluminum Cucumbers" from Tsoi's first recording:

Zdravstvujte devochki!
Zdravstvujte mal'chiki!
Smotrite na menya v okno
I mne kidajte svoj pal'chiki da
Ved' ya sazhayu alyuminievye ogurtsy
Na brezentovom pole
Ya sazhayu alyuminievye ogurtsy
Na brezentovom pole.

Tri chukotskykh mudretsa
Tverdyat tverdyat mne bez kontsa:
"Metall ne prineset ploda
Igra ne stoit svech
A rezul'tat – truda"
No ya sazhayu alyuminievye ogurtsy
Na brezentovom pole
No ya sazhayu alyuminievye ogurtsy
Na brezentovom pole

[43] Viktor Tsoi, interview *Molodezh' Estonii*, 9 May 1988, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 199.

Zloe beloe koleno
Pytaetsya menya dostat'
Kolom koleno kolyu veny
V nadezhde tajny razgadat' - zachem
Ya sazhayu alyuminievye ogurtsy
Na brezentovom pole
Ya sazhayu alyuminievye ogurtsy
Na brezentovom pole

Knopki skrepki klyopki
Dyrki bulki vilki
Zdes' traktopy projdut moi
I upadut v kopilku
Upadut tuda
Gde ya sazhayu alyuminievye ogurtsy
Na brezentovom pole
Ya sazhayu alyuminievye ogurtsy
Na brezentovom pole[44]

Good morning girls!
Good morning boys!
Look at me from the window
And throw their fingers up at me, yeah
Cause I'm planting aluminum cucumbers
On a field of canvas
I'm planting aluminum cucumbers
On a field of canvas

Three clever men from Chukhotka
Prove to me again and again:
"Metal cannot bring fruit
It's not worth the trouble
And the result's more work"
But I'm planting aluminum cucumbers
On a field of canvas
I'm planting aluminum cucumbers
On a field of canvas

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[44] Viktor Tsoi, "Alyuminievye ogurtsy", *45*, performed by Kino, recorded 1982, Andrey Tropillo (Producer), re-mastered at Studio SBI. Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 293-294.

There's the greatest evil fatigue,
It tries to catch me everywhere
Its stake stabs me in my veins
In trying to discover the secret of
Why I'm planting aluminum cucumbers
On a field of canvas
I'm planting aluminum cucumbers
On a field of canvas

Buttons, clips, and rivets,
Holes, buns, and forks.
As my tractors pass right by
They'll fall into the moneybox
Fall there
Where I'm planting aluminum cucumbers
On a field of canvas
I'm planting aluminum cucumbers
On a field of canvas

Keeping in mind Bakhtin's theory of dialogism,[45] it is important to try to locate the different "voices" of this work. Intonation is of utmost importance in the analysis of meaning. Todd III's sociology of literature builds from Bakhtin and searches for the social and aesthetic voice of the author's historical time.[46] What cultural values are being commented on? How is the author's contemporary social situation reflected here? Steinholt takes this social approach further into the realm of psychological mental theory in his cognitive poetics for the analysis of music. How the music performs with the text is important as it generates emotion for the audience and reflects the state of mind of the performer, as well as indicating

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[45] M. M. Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel," in Michael Holquist (ed.), *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1992).

[46] Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin*, 6-9; William Mills Todd III, *Literature and Society in Imperial Russia, 1800-1914* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1978) , 1.

possible associations with other music and thereby placing the song into a broader tradition of thought or dialogue.[47]

The song begins with a simple short acoustic guitar solo and then bursts into a full ensemble with a walking bass line,[48] basic hand drumming on a small portable drum, flute and a twinkling glockenspiel. It has a slightly folksy musical texture to it and immediately conjures up an image of a small group of people with simple traveling instruments, performing outside. The pitch of Tsoi's voice is lighter than usual and floats along almost in laughter. This performance indicates that Tsoi is in a jocular, mocking frame of mind and the folksy blend of sound places the song in a kind of mass song or campfire tradition. This performance provides clues to the possible social context; what the song is reacting to in Tsoi's specific experience. We know that it was a teenage Tsoi that wrote this and given that the state was determined to control all youth activities, we can assume it has to do with school or Komsomol experience. The instrumentation of the song indicates travel with fairly accessible and easy to transport instruments. Given these clues, and the agricultural references, it is natural to relate the experience of student brigade workers (SOS) who were obligated by the state to perform agricultural work – often in distant locations, and tasks with little meaning other than keeping the youth actively working.[49] According to many youth there was a high degree of waste of resources

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[47] Yngvar B. Steinholt, "Cognitive Poetics in the Analysis of popular Music: A New Approach to song lyrics?" Paper for IASPM 2005 Rome, at www.hf.uib.no/i/russik/steinholt.rir_files.html.

[48] A walking bass line consists of a line of equal valued notes.

[49] Andrew Wilson and Nina Bachkatov, eds., *Living With Glasnost: Youth and Society in a Changing Russia* (London: Penguin, 1988) , 90-92.

and time in the use of the unskilled brigade, in addition to the humiliating unwelcome reception they received from the local inhabitants and regular workers.[50] All these features are humorously depicted in Tsoi's lyrics.

Like Lermontov's generation, youth were left with little motivation and a bleak reality. Since the Patriotic War, education had become focused on labour, although youth were still traditionally encouraged to obtain higher education – often useless in a state that increasingly required more labourers.[51] In consequence, many youth chose undemanding jobs so they could focus on their more meaningful free time activities. This reaction to Soviet life was very popular. The reality of meaningless labor, dilapidated working places, in addition to no salary incentive, provided little to be excited about.[52] It is this kind of education that infuses society with mediocrity.

In a 1987 interview Tsoi discussed the problem of rising mediocrity,[53] almost echoing the thoughts of Lermontov in his poems "Monologue" and "Meditation." At a time when the slogan "Youth is the Future!"[54] was popular, it seems little was done

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[50] Ibid, 90.

[51] Riordan, *Soviet Youth Culture*, 5.

[52] Wilson and Bachkatov, 83-86.

[53] Viktor Tsoi, interview *Argumenty i fakty*, No.39, 1987, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 198.

[54] Wilson and Bachkatov, 44.

to help youth develop and encourage their talents.[55] The song "Alyuminievye ogurtsy" reveals the absurd reality of many youth serving the state yet knowing that it is all meaningless – there is nothing to be gained from planting aluminum cucumbers.

Revelation of the irrational world was a popular theme in many of Tsoi's songs. Songs like "Vremya est', a deneg net / Got Time, But No Money",[56] "Moi druzya / My Friends,"[57] "Trollejbus / Trolleybus,"[58] and "Videli noch' /We Saw the Night,"[59] satirically address specific problems of youth having no place to go, nothing to do, and no money anyway. "Moi druzya / My Friends" is especially powerful as it likens the life of many youth to a boring and pointless march:

> Prishyol domoj i kak vsegda, opyat' odin
> Moj dom pustoj no zazvonit vdrug telefon
> I budut v dver' stuchat' i s ulitsy krichat
> Chto khvatit spat' i p'yanyj golos skazhet: "Daj pozhrat'"

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[55] It seems that little was done to include youth in the Perestroika program. Youth were addressed by Gorbachev on the plan to include them in Perestroika, at the All-Union Student Forum on 15 November 1989; M. Gorbachev, *Channel the Energy of Youth Into Perestroika* (Moscow: Novosti Press, 1989). However, this was already in the fifth year of Perestroika and the lengthy speech has no concrete description of the roles youth are to play.

[56] Viktor Tsoi, "Vremya est', a deneg net," *45*, performed by Kino, recorded 1982, Andrey Tropillo (Producer), re-mastered at Studio SBI, Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD.

[57] Viktor Tsoi, "Moi druzya," *45*.

[58] Viktor Tsoi, "Trollejbus," *46*, performed by Kino, recorded 1986, Aleksej Vishnya (Producer), re-mastered at Studio SBI, Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD.

[59] Viktor Tsoi, "Videli noch'," *Noch'*, performed by Kino, recorded 1985-6 Andrey Tropillo (Producer), re-mastered at Studio MMS, Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD.

Moi druz'ya vsegda idut po zhizni marshem
I ostanovki tol'ko u pivnykh lar'kov

Moj dom byl pust teper' narodu tam polno
V kotoryj raz moi druz'ya tam p'yut vino
I kto-to zanyal tualet uzhe davno razbiv okno
A mne uzhe priznat'sya vse ravno

Moi druz'ya vsegda idut po zhizni marshem
I ostanovki tol'ko u pivnykh lar'kov

A ya smeyus' khot' mne i ne vsegda smeshno
I ochen' zlyus' kogda mne govoryat
Chto zhit' vot tak kak ya sejchas, nel'zya
No pochemu? Ved' ya zhivu
Na eto ne otvetit' nikomu

Moi druz'ya vsegda idut po zhizni marshem
I ostanovki tol'ko u pivnykh lar'kov[60]

I came home
As usual, alone
My house is empty
But suddenly the phone rings
And suddenly a knock on the door
and shouting from the street yelling
It's enough to sleep
and a drunk voice will say:
"Give me something to eat"

My friends always go
through life marching
Only stopping
To buy beer

My house is empty,
But now it's crowded.
And as many times before
My friends drink wine there
And someone broke the window
long ago and got stuck in the bathroom
To tell the truth
I don't care.

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[60] Viktor Tsoi, "Moi Druzya", *45*; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 296.

My friends always go
through life marching
Only stopping
To buy beer.

And I laugh
Even though it's not always funny to me
And I get very angry
when they tell me
That you can't live
Like I do now.
But why? Don't I live
But to this no one can respond.

My friends always go
through life marching
Only stopping
To buy beer.[61]

A short introduction of a snare drum provides a military mood. Then Tsoi's mistuned guitar and voice begin the stanza at a slower tempo. The tempo shifts back to the military march at the chorus with a second guitar and by the second chorus a pizzicato cello thumps along. This binary musical pattern provides contrast between himself and his friends. Each verse is comprised of only Tsoi and solo guitar. Each chorus has an increasingly raucous texture – more instruments and a rising volume. At the end of the exposition, a flute joins in to a more heavily orchestrated chorus – perhaps signaling that as the friends march more and more people join the parade. The melody ends and a solo snare drum fades away.

The song is a powerful message declaring the bleakness and pointlessness of life, and the willingness of people to continue being servile as long as they have an easy escape. Like Lermontov in his poems Tsoi groans for his generation. Throughout the eighties youth still faced boredom. Many youth dealt with this

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[61] Translation by Thomas Cushman, in Cushman, 158-159.

through alcoholism, as drinking was a mainstream escape, and house parties or gatherings in stairwells were often easy options for informal activity.[62] The song retained its relevance in later years. During Glasnost, the media reports discussed in the paper *Komsomolskaya pravda* indicated that most youth perceived that everything was the same despite government promises and announcements of change.[63]

Similar to Lermontov, Tsoi was the "symbol of the 'lost' generation" and "reflected the entire bitterness and protest against the spiritual stagnation."[64] Viktor Tsoi was often considered the "voice of his generation."[65] His songs deal with truth and real experiences of Soviet youth – he does not attempt to paint a false picture of happiness and instead sings an "unhappy song" –the title of a song on his penultimate album, *Zvezda po imeni 'solntse' / Star in the Name of the Sun.* In "Nevesyolaya pesnya / Unhappy Song" he cries out:

Nashi reki bedny vodoj
V nashi okna ne vidno dnya
Nashe utro pokhozhe na noch'
Nu a noch' – dlya menya
Glyadya v zhidkoe zerkalo luzh
Na chasy chto polveka stoyat
Na do dyr zatselovannyj flag
Ya poltsarstva otdam za konya

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[62] Easton, 69-70.

[63] *Komsomolskya pravda*, 25 April 1986.

[64] Shlyamovich, "Interesnoe 'Kino' Viktora Tsoya i ego povoroty," 228.

[65] Dodolev, "Nachal'nik 'Kamchatki'," 217; Vyacheslav Ogaj, in Ogaj, 1.

Igraj nevesyolaya pesnya moya igraj igraj!

Komandiry armii let
My teryali v boyu den' za dnyom
A kogda my razzhigali ogon'
Nash ogon' tushili dozhdyom
My sidim u razbitykh koryt'
My gadaem na Roze Vetrov
A kogda prikhodit vremya vstavat'
My sidim my zhdyom

Igraj nevesyolaya pesnya moya igraj igraj!
Igraj nevesyolaya pesnya moya igraj igraj![66]

Our rivers are shallow and weak.
In our windows the day's still unseen.
Our morning looks like night.
And the night is for me.
Looking at watery mirrors of puddles,
For half a century the clock has stopped
At the flag which has been kissed to holes
I'll give my kingdom for a horse

Play on, my unhappy song - Play on, play on!

Commanding officers of our Army Years,
We lost day after day in the fight.
And when we kindled our fire,
Our fire was extinguished by rain.
We sit by broken dreams
And tell our future by compass rose,
And when the time comes to get up
We sit, we wait.

Play on, my unhappy song - Play on, play on!
Play on, my unhappy song - Play on, play on!

A drone like, slow moving bass and steady drum provide a lengthy sixteen bar introduction to the song. Recorded in 1988-89, the song was probably written

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[66] Viktor Tsoi, "Nevesyolaya pesnya," *Zvezda po imeni 'solntse'*, performed by Kino, recorded 1988-89, Valera Leont'ev (Producer), re-mastered at Studio MMD, Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 331-332.

shortly before or during 1988. Events of this time indicate that there were some major declarations and discussions being made: Soviet forces would finally be leaving Afghanistan, and Reagan had come to Moscow to continue talks with Gorbachev on nuclear weapons. Yet this song, with its emphasis on the bass, seems to indicate a feeling of mistrust and resistance. Change has been promised, yet Tsoi does not rely on promises and false expectation. He states "Na chasy, chto polveka stoyat / For half a century the clock has stopped." This feeling that change has not or will not come was common. As stated earlier the letter sections of the papers included readers' statements that things had remained the same. Andrej Burlaka, music journalist and editor of the popular samizdat' journal *RIO*, recalled that many in the music underground "never believed that the system would be broken."[67] The picture of someone choosing to sit when the time has come to stand, is one that rejects false hope. This dismissal of hope is indicated not only in letters to the press, and statements like those of *RIO*'s Burlaka, but also in the absence of young leaders.[68] While the song expresses this distrust in the promise of change, it does not promote resignation to fate. The deep bass notes of the song seem to indicate resistance by their strong accent on each beat. The song is propelled forward. The voices are slow to start, yet the song is ordered to "play on". The hero will continue to push against the irrational world.

Although Tsoi and Lermontov provide a harsh view of their time – portraying a stifling environment, it does not mean that they viewed their worlds as predictable. Lermontov's writings often indicate a world full of hypocrisy and shifting values,

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[67] Mikhail Borzykin, interview by Y. B. Steinholt, 4.

[68] Wilson and Bachkatov, 206.

which need not be bound by fate. In his novel, *Hero of Our Time,* the last section is a short story, which contains his hero Pechorin's analysis of fate and predestination. Lermontov concludes with Pechorin deciding that:

> I prefer to doubt everything. Such an attitude makes no difference to a man's determination – on the contrary, as far as I am concerned, I always go more boldly forward when I don't know what lies ahead. After all, the worst you can do is die, and you've got to die sometime.[69]

Pechorin is an example of one who actively chooses not to resign but rather to resist certainties.[70] Tsoi also asserts, "The world is multifaceted, complex and uncontrolled"[71] and he refuses to predict what he will do in the future as "life is full of chances."[72] This is very similar to Lermontov's Pechorin when he exclaims, " What do I expect of the future? Absolutely nothing."[73] The hero refuses to let himself be drawn into resignation to future fate in an irrational world. Rather he proposes to act rationally, not limiting himself to certainties.

The hero found in both Lermontov's and Tsoi's works is a rational thinker, unwilling to play games and often brutally honest to the point of alienating himself. The problem of hypocrisy was prevalent in both Lermontov's and Tsoi's societies. Lermontov wrote during a time when masquerades and romanticism were at the height of popularity. Both Golstein and Todd III agree that the melodramatic

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[69] Mikhail Lermontov, *Hero of Our Time,* 185.

[70] Golstein, 119, 124.

[71] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Politekhnik,* 24 February 1984, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 196.

[72] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Pravda,* Moscow, 5 December 1991, in Ogaj, 20.

[73] Lermontov, *Hero of Our Time,* 148.

literature of the time became a cultural phenomenon, a fashion; life imitated art.[74] Lermontov especially attacked the masquerade as a false freedom.[75] He saw his society as a mere imitation of the values of the West that denied the "repressive reality of Russia."[76] Lermontov condemns his society for creating a life where a mask is more acceptable than showing one's own face, permitting people to avoid personal responsibility.[77] His first biographer, Friedrich Bodenstadt wrote: "Having been raised in a society where hypocrisy and deception are considered the sign of bon ton, Lermontov remained a stranger to all lies and pretenses till his last sigh."[78]

Viktor Tsoi was also acknowledged as someone who rejected falseness. He was described shortly after his death as being "an honest man – he was always honest."[79] This quality of truthfulness was very desirable in a society that had learned to live with hypocrisy. Letters in the newspapers and literary journals of Tsoi's time reveal that youth knew the hypocrisy around them. These letters mentioned that people "require two-faces"[80] to live, that people are living a "two faced life,"[81] and a young Komsomol leader realizes that she "can't deceive [her]self"

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[74] Golstein, 137; Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin,* 144.

[75] Golstein, 63-65.

[76] Ibid, 22-23.

[77] Ibid, 64.

[78] Friedrich Bodenstadt, as quoted in Ibid, 68.

[79] Klip 12"Stuk, peremen," interview with Aleksandr Slkyar in *Chelovek v chyornom,* CD-ROM (Moscow: Sozdannuyu tvorcheskoj gruppoj "A-TATA",1990-91).

[80] *Komsomolskaya pravda,* 5 April 1986.

[81] *Komsomolskaya pravda,* 14 December 1986.

and chooses to quit her position.[82] Youth were searching for truth and wanted to speak out and "call a spade a spade" as one boy wrote in his letter.[83] This hypocritical life was noticeable even in the entertainment available. The newspaper *Komsomolskaya pravda* remarked that film and television content had little to do with reality, it was no wonder the youth were bored.[84] The opening lines of Tsoi's song "Pora / The Time Has Come" reveal the danger of false reality and the resulting dissatisfaction:

> Chtenie knig – poleznaya veshch' no opasnaya kak dinamit
> Ya ne pomnyu skol'ko mne bylo let
> Kogda ya prinyal eto na vid
> I mne skuchno smotret' segodnya kino
> Kino uzhe bylo vchera[85]
>
> *Reading books is a useful thing but it's dangerous as dynamite,*
> *I don't remember how old I was*
> *When I first took that into consideration.*
> *It's boring to go to the movies today,*
> *I was already there yesterday.*

Confronting the escapist norm, Viktor Tsoi also chose roles in film that promoted the ideals of integrity and rejection of counterfeit life. In the first films in which he appeared in he merely played himself.[86] His role in the film *Igla / The*

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[82] *Yunost'*, No. 6 1988, in Jim Riordan and Sue Bridger, eds. *Dear Comrade Editor: Readers' Letters to the Soviet Press Under Perestroika* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1992) , 45-46.

[83] *Moskovskij kommunist,* No.2 1989, in Ibid, 43.

[84] *Komsomolskaya pravda,* 5 December 1986.

[85] Viktor Tsoi, "Pora," *46,* performed by Kino. Recorded 1983, Aleksej Vishnya (Producer), re-mastered at Studio SBI, Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD.; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 302.

[86] *Konets kanikul / End of holiday,* 1986; *Yia –Khkha / Ya-Ha,* 1987; *Assa / Assa,* Dir. Sergei Solove'v, 1987; *Rok /Rock,* 1988.

Needle[87] is perhaps his most important appearance as a hero, as he himself helped to shape the role.[88] This film stands in contrast to the normal entertainment conventions of the time. The main plot is the attempt made by the hero Moro (Tsoi) to save a drug addicted former girlfriend. In this film, Tsoi reveals a hero that "resists ordinary consciousness"; he is rational in an irrational world.[89] It is interesting that the film uses masks to hide the faces of many of the characters in the film, leaving Tsoi's bare face in the hero's role. Like Lermontov, Tsoi has rejected the masquerade and has chosen to act as a responsible individual. Still despite the hero's efforts he is unable to save the girl and is fatally wounded. The heroism thus becomes his integrity rather than an actual physical feat. Film critics claimed that Tsoi created a new concept of a romantic hero but Tsoi replied that he "simply tried to act naturally."[90]

This "naturalness" or the ability to remain true to oneself and not just be an image was a defining trait of Tsoi. He was asked about his image and he replied that he didn't have one and said "I behave how I consider is necessary in whatever situation."[91] He chose to write songs on what he personally knew and experienced,[92]

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[87] *Igla,* Dir. Rashid Nugmanov, 1988.

[88] "Rashid Nugmanov: Bog vodel ei ego rukoj," interv'yu podgotovleno Genriettoj Kan, Alma-Ata, in Ogaj, 22-23.

[89] Sholokhov, "Igla v stog sena," 237.

[90] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Molodoj leninets,* 6 May 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 204.

[91] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Sovetskaya molodezh',* 6 May 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 206.

[92] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Argumenty i fakty,* No. 39 1987, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 198.

and stated that, "I am exactly a supporter of the word 'I'. It is more honest."[93] Tsoi retains the importance of individual integrity by refusing to compromise because "when honestly disappears – they [his audience] really won't pardon anything."[94] An article on his death declared:

> Tsoi never lied and never pretended to be more than he was. He was and remained himself. It was impossible for people not to believe him. Out of all our legends of rock, great singers and poets in Tsoi only was it impossible to set the line between image and reality. He sang as he lived.[95]

This strong value of integrity in a time when deceit was part of life is what makes him a star or a hero. Raymond Williams suggests that the notion of personalities who posses strong qualities is related to the notion of stardom.[96] Richard Dryer agrees stating that what makes a star is someone who can represent the potential of the individual.[97] Tsoi's uncompromising attitude is what allows him to be a hero to a generation that desired to reach its own potential.

Personal integrity and the rejection of imitation life involve making harsh statements in order to shatter the false expectations and the hopes of the deceived. The hero attempts to disillusion others through "bitter truths." In Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time,* the chapter entitled "Princess Mary" is a journal entry by a young officer named Pechorin who dissects and analyzes the social life at a spa near

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[93] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Molodoj leninets*, 6 May 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 203.

[94] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Argumenty i fakty*, No. 39 1987, in Tsoi and Zhtinskij, 197.

[95] *Komsomolskya pravda*, 17 August 1990.

[96] Raymond Williams quoted in Andrew Tolston, *Mediations: Text and Discourse in Media Studies* (New York: Arnold, 1996) , 126-127.

[97] Richard Dryer in P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) , 17.

Pyatigorsk. The story unfolds with Pechorin allowing a young Princess Mary to consider him an admirer of hers. He has done so with little effort as he knows that her expectations of life are grounded in Romanticism. Mary has read Byron and loves "talking about emotions, passions and that sort of thing."[98] A friend of Pechorin confides in him saying, "The daughter [Mary] was very interested and evidently saw you as the hero of some novel."[99] The narration finally ends with Pechorin delivering an abrasive rejection of Mary[100] that literary critic Golstein believes shocks her into facing reality.[101]

This rejection is similar to two of Tsoi's songs. The first, written in 1982, is "Vos'miklassnitsa / Eighth Grader." The song is rather simple and Tsoi considered it more of a pop song,[102] but its subject is an important time of life – the point of disillusionment. The eighth grade was the significant turning point in the education of Soviet youth. Three routes were possible: general education (to prepare for university), specialized technical school (*tekhnikum*), and trade school (*PTU*).[103] The eighth grade was the beginning of a youth's future adult career and life. In this song an older boy is talking to his young girlfriend whom he realizes is completely guided by learned notions of romance. The song sways back in forth in a mainly two-chord progression and Tsoi carefully enunciates each word as if he is speaking to a child.

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[98] Lermontov, *Hero of Our Time*, 104.

[99] Ibid, 103.

[100] Ibid, 173-174.

[101] Golstein, 150.

[102] Zhitinskij, 344.

[103] Wilson and Bachkatov, 45-46.

Which she is - a young teenager who believes in romanticism and is caught between the fantasies of childhood and oncoming adulthood. She is like Princess Mary gushing with her emotions and passions, playing at romantic games. This is especially noticeable in this portion of a middle verse of the song:

> Ty govorish' iz-za tebya tam kto-to poluchil sinyak
> Mnogoznachitel'no molchu i dal'she my idem gulat'
> Vos'miklassnitsa...[104]
>
> *You say that because of you someone got a bruise*
> *Significantly, I keep silent and we walk along further*
> *Eighth grader...*

The idea of a disillusioned hero and a romantically deluded girlfriend is matured in the later song "Ty vyglyadish' tak nesovremenno / You Look So Out-of-Date" from the 1985 album *Eto ne lyubov' /It's not Love:*

> Ty zvonish' mne kazhdyj den'
> Ya ne znayu kak mne byt'
> Ya ne znayu kak mne dat' tebe ponyat
> Chto ya uzhe ne tot
> Ran'she ya tebya lyubil
> No serdtse bol'she ne poyot
> I s momenta nashej pervoj vstrechi
> Skoro budet tselyj god
> Ty vyglyadish' tak nesovremenno ryadom so mnoj
>
> Ya zhe govoril tebe
> Chto tak uzhe khodit' nel'zya
> A ty ne ponimaesh' nichego
> I nichego ne khochesh' menyat'
> A ya uchil tebya tselyj god
> Tratil vremya tselyj god
> Ty dumala chto ya shuchu
> I do sikh por ne mozhesh' ponyat'
> Ty vyglyadish' tak nesovremenno ryadom so mnoj[105]

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[104] Viktor Tsoi, "Vos'miklassnitsa," *45*; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 296.

[105] Viktor Tsoi "Ty vygladish' tak nesovremenno," *Eto ne lyubov'*, performed by Kino, recorded 1985, Aleksej Vishnya (Producer), re-mastered at Studio MMD, Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 314-315.

You call me up every day,
I don't know what's to be done
I don't know how I can tell you so you understand
That I'm already not the same.
Earlier I loved you,
But my heart doesn't sing anymore.
Since the moment we first met
It's already been a whole year.
You look so out-of-date next to me.

I already said to you
That it's impossible to live this way.
But you don't understand anything
And you don't want to change.
And I taught you for a whole year,
Spent time with you all year,
And you thought I was joking
And to this moment you still don't understand.
You look so out-of-date next to me.

The guitars that dominate this song are slightly out of tune and this may reflect the discord of the couple in the narration of the song. The melodic line of the chorus ascends with "Ty vyglyadish' tak nesovremenno / You look so outdated" and falls in an exasperated sigh with the words "ryadom so mnoj / next to me." This word painting reveals frustration. Like Pechorin, he sees himself as a teacher: "Ya uchil tebya tselyj god / I taught you for a whole year." He is more aware of reality and refuses to live in a false dream, and he chooses to stun his former lover into acceptance of the brutal truth. He refuses to avoid confrontation, even in matters of love. He is harsh and sarcastic.

As a result of choosing to live out truth, this type of hero is often seen as an outsider or superfluous. Many of Lermontov's works have a "feeling of otherness, of not belonging to the world."[106] His heroes are seen as outsiders. In his poetry he

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[106] Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin,* 141.

often writes of being alone. For example, Lermontov's poem written in 1841 "Vykhozhu odin ya na dorogu / All Alone Along the Road I am Walking":

1
Vykhozhu odin ya na dorogu;
Skvoz' tuman kremnistyj put' blestit;
Noch' tikha. Pustynya vnemlet bogu,
I zvevda s zvezdoyu govorit.

2
V nebesakh torzhestvenno i chudno!
Spit zemlya v siyan'e golubom...
Chto zhe mne tak bol'no i tak trudno?
Zhdu l' chego? Zhaleyu li o chem?

3
Uzh ne zhdu ot zhizni nichego ya,
I ne zhal' mne proshlogo nichut';
Ya ishchu svobody i pokoya!
Ya b khotel zabyt'sya i zasnut'!

4
No ne tem kholodnym snom mogily...
Ya b zhelal naveki tak zasnut',
Chtob v grudi dremali zhizni sily,
Chtob dysha vzdymalas' tikho grud';

5
Chtob vsyu noch' ves' den' moj slukh leleya,
Pro lyubov' mne sladkij golos pel,
Nado mnoj chtob vechno zeleneya
Temnyj dub sklonyalsya i shumel.[107]

1
All alone along the road I am walking,
In the haze the moonbeams shed their light.
High above the stars are quietly talking,
The Almighty rules the silent night.

2
Heaven brings solemnity and wonder,
And the earth is sleeping in a mist.
What is it that tears my heart asunder?
Barren hopes? Regrets of something missed?

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[107] Mikhail Lermontov, "Vykhozhu odin ya na dorogu," in Liberman, 272.

3
In my bosom not a hope is living,
And my past has ceased to cause regret.
All I need is freedom and oblivion,
And I wish to sleep and to forget.

4
But I fear the frosty sleep eternal...
I would like to have a peaceful rest
And preserve my life bestowing kernel
With some breath and warmth within my breast.

5
I would like a melody unending
day and night to sing of happy love
And an oak, its heavy branches bending
To caress me gently from above.[108]

The poem is full of an anxiety that Lermontov cannot name. He is not sure what is heavy on his heart. Yet, despite being alone, he is not really feeling lonely – it is more a longing to rise to one's potential, to have freedom and even life in death. The hope of a "sladkij golos pel / sweet voice singing" or as the translation states "a melody unending" provides him with strength to live and to face death. Golstein remarks that Lermontov often alluded to music and sound as a source for the hero's strength.[109]

Viktor Tsoi wrote many songs in which he is walking alone, usually at night. Songs such as "Prokhozhu / Get Away,"[110] "Ya idu po ulitse / I Walk Along the

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[108] Mikhail Lermontov, "All Alone Along the Road I am Walking," in Ibid, 273.

[109] Golstein, 180-181.

[110] Viktor Tsoi, "Prokhozhu," *Gruppa krovi*, performed by Kino, recorded 1986-88, Aleksej Vishnya (Producer), re-mastered at Studio MMD, Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD.

Street,"[111] "Progulka romantika / Romantic Walk,"[112] "Zakroj za mnoj dver' / Close the Door,"[113] and "Zhizn' v steklakh / Life Through Glass."[114] A journalist once suggested that the "world of Tsoi is a brotherhood of lone people, united by an absence of a way out."[115]Tsoi agreed with the brotherhood of individuals but denied that he suggests there is no way out.[116] Like Lermontov, he expresses the struggle and the reality of the individual, and although he does not provide answers he does provide a sense of hope and of strength. This lone hero, which shares the desire of Lermontov's hero to have freedom to be himself, is found in two songs entitled "Bezdel'niik / Bum." Compare Lermontov's poem to Tsoi's first "Bezdel'niik / Bum" of 1982:

Gulyayu ya odin gulyayu
Chto dal'she delat' ya ne znayu
Net doma nikogo net doma
Ya lishnij slovno kucha loma u –u
Ya bezdel'nik o mama mama
Ya bezdel'nik u-u
Ya bezdel'nik o-o mama mama

---

[111] Viktor Tsoi, "Ya idu po ulitse," *45.*

[112] Viktor Tsoi, "Progulka romantika," *Nachal'nik Komchatki,* performed by Kino, recorded 1984, 1986, Andrey Tropillo (Producer), re-mastered at Studio MMS, Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD.

[113] Viktor Tsoi, "Zakroj za mnoj dver'," *Gruppa krovi.*

[114] Viktor Tsoi "Zhizn' v steklakh," *Noch'.*

[115] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Molodoj leninets,* 6 May 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 205.

[116] Ibid.

V tolpe ya kak igolka v sene
Ya snova chelovek bez tseli
Boltayus' tselyj den' gulyayu
Ne znayu ya nichego ne znayu
Ya bezdel'nik o mama mama
Ya bezdel'nik u-u
Ya bezdel'nik o-o mama mama[117]

I walk. I walk all alone.
What's to do – I dunno.
No home, nobody's at home.
But I'm unnecessary, like a heap of scrap - Ooo
I'm a bum, oh, mama, mama,
I'm a bum - Ooo
I'm a bum, oh, mama, mama.

I'm in a crowd, like a needle in the hay
I'm a man without a goal again.
Just hanging out, the whole day walking
Dunno. I don't know anything.
I'm a bum, oh, mama, mama,
I'm a bum - Ooo
I'm a bum, oh, mama, mama!

"Bezdel'nik" literally means "someone without anything to do" or "without employment." The sparse accompaniment, of only two guitars and a metronome-like bass drum, to the hollow sounding voice of Tsoi, provides a texture of "nothingness." There does seem to be a message that the singer is unable to find an outlet. He is thus alienated from his world – he does not fit in. The problem is left unresolved as Tsoi's voice repeats the chorus and the music recording decrescendos into silence.

The "Bezdel'nik 2 / Bum 2" song of Tsoi's acts like a part two of his solitary walk. In this song Tsoi provides clues on how to provide freedom for oneself. He sings:

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[117] Viktor Tsoi,"Bezdel'nik," *45*; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 294.

Net menya doma tselymi dnyami
Zanyat bezdel'em igrayu slovami
Kazhdoe utro snova zhizn' svoyu nachinayu
I ni cherta ni v chem ne ponimayu

Ya lish' nachnetsya novyj den'
Khozhu otbrasyvayu ten' s litsom nakhala
Nastupit vecher ya opyat'
Otpravlyus' spat' chtob zavtra vstat'
I vse s nachala

Nogi unosyat moi ruki i tulovishche
I golova otpravlyaetsya selledom
Slovno s pokhmel'ya shagayu po ulitse ya
Mozg perepolnen sumburom i bredom

Vse govoryat chto nado kem-to mne stanovit'sya
A ya khotel by ostat'sya soboj
Mne stalo trudno teper' prosto razozlit'sya
I ya idu pogloshchennyj tolpoj

Ya lish' nachnetsya novyj den'
Khozhu otbrasyvayu ten' s litsom nakhala
Nastupit vecher ya opyat'
Otpravlyus' spat' chtob zavtra vstat'
I vse s nachala [118]

I have a house of entire days
Busy with idleness – I'm playing with words.
Every morning I begin my life again
But I don't understand the terms or what.

I, only at the beginning of a new day
Walk, cast a shadow with my impudent face.
Evening comes, I again
Set off to sleep, in order to get up tomorrow.
And all from the beginning.

My legs take my hands and body away
And my head goes along the track.
As if from a hangover I step along the street
The brain is overfilled by confusion and delirium.

[118] Viktor Tsoi, "Bezdel'nik 2," *45*; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 295.

Everyone's saying that I need to become someone
But I wanted to remain myself.
I've simply become difficult to anger now
And I go, absorbed by the crowd.

I, only at the beginning of a new day
Walk, cast a shadow with my impudent face
Evening comes, I again
Set off to sleep, in order to get up tomorrow.
and all from the beginning.

Again the two guitars provide the introduction. However, this time they are used in a more ornamental manner: one guitar begins, another joins and then they divide with one voice falling as another rises and in a few bars the mood becomes lighter as Tsoi sings. The higher notes of the melody accent the second line of each verse. This declamatory accent emphasizes the text of these lines: "zanyat bezdel'em – igrayu slovami / busy with idleness – I'm playing with words;" "khozhu, otbrasyvayu ten' s litsom nakhala / Walk, cast a shadow with my impudent face;" and "A ya khotel ostat'sya soboj / But I wanted to remain myself." These phrases, in combination with the more consonant music when compared to the earlier more dissonant song, suggest resolution of the earlier uneasiness. He is comfortable in his idleness and even "impudent". He states that he is unwilling to live any differently. This feels much like Lermontov's poem. A walker goes out alone and feels uneasiness yet the lyrics end in a statement of peace. There will be freedom of the self. Lermontov suggests freedom and oblivion; life in death. Tsoi has resolved to live internally – he is not easily angered, he is of the world (absorbed by the crowd)

yet not in it (he is not bothered by it and he remains himself).[119]

Nineteenth-century poet and twentieth century rock musician both have chosen an internal freedom: they walk the path alone and resolve to live, even in isolation. No one else is making their choices – they walk alone. They deliberately set out on their walks to choose their own paths. The world may be bleak but their works are not so dark – there is power and freedom. Troitsky once commented that Tsoi's songs "transmitted precisely the spirit of the time and the mood of the crowd.... I'd never seen so many open smiles in Leningrad; the typical bitter and dark image of rockers was no longer appropriate or cool."[120]

This "otherness" of the heroes of Lermontov and Tsoi and of the writers themselves, suggests that they have answers for living. However, this is where the heroes of Tsoi and Lermontov really stand out. Golstein states that Lermontov, unlike most Russian writers and literary heroes, does not provide "some guiding ideology."[121] His most well known hero Pechorin suggests that it is beyond him to provide answers when he says, only "God knows." He can only point out what he sees as wrong and false in his experience.[122] Tsoi also is not ashamed to

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[119] Yuri Domanskij reflects on the significance of solitude in Tsoi and in the romantic tradition. Solitude is a way of life. He also asserts that there is as special understanding in both rock and romantic traditions that life and death as equally likely alternatives that are related, and more complex than opposite states. A hero can thus embrace death. Domanskij, 37-40.

[120] Troitsky, 126.

[121] Golstein, 123.

[122] Ibid, 130.

acknowledge that he does not have answers or suggestions to his listeners on how to live, he said, "I don't know."[123] He is not attempting to save or guide people.

Although Lermontov and Tsoi do not provide a concrete solution to society they do provide an example of true freedom of the individual through the artistic sense. Writing and music provide a way to accept anxiety and loss, the creative sense helps to mediate and give peace so that the individual can live responsibly rather than resorting to external abusive conduct.[124] Tsoi said that music is important because it is a way for the individual to be heard, and that music has the ability to help with problems.[125] Members of the Soviet rock community saw "rock music as the only way to inner freedom, a way of thinking that was long since dead and gone in the West."[126] The song provides a way of life, a way to develop individual freedom, and is a necessary part of authentic freedom:

> Drinking and singing are the two constants firmly embedded in our [Russian] national character and fully independent of the changing political climate. You can lose yourself in song just as well as in wine. The song heals your wounds like a proven folk medicine. You pour your heart into it, you struggle and rejoice, you live and you die, and you come back to life with every song you sing: 'For only song, and song alone, will always stay with you!' Such is the sum of wisdom one gleans from Russia's long and troubled history.[127]

It is not just about escape, rather it includes self-development and rebirth: "you come back to life with every song you sing". The passage says that "song alone, will

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[123] Aksentsov, "Den' v 'Kino'," 223.

[124] Golstein, 187.

[125] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Argumenty i fakty*, No.39, 1987, 198.

[126] Mikhail Borzykin, interview by Y. B. Steinholt, 6; Cushman, 142.

[127] Zara Abdullaeva, "Popular Culture," in Dmitri N. Shalin ed., *Russian Culture at the Crossroads Paradoxes of Postcommunist Consciousness,* (Boulder, CO:: Westview Press, 1996) , 212.

always stay with you!" just as Viktor Tsoi's "Unhappy Song" must "play on" and Lermontov's poem "All Alone Along the Road" concludes with a voice or a melody unceasing. Music has no borders - it reaches beyond space and time.[128]

Lermontov's poetry and prose are filled with descriptions of sounds and song that seem to soothe his heroes. He takes joy in the natural eternal music of the waves in the 1832 poem "Dlya chego ya ne rodilsya / What a Pity that the Maker":

Dlya chego ya ne rodilsya
Etoj sineyu volnoj?
Kak by shumno ya katilsya
Pod serebryanoj lunoj,
O! Kak strastno ya lobzal by
Zolotistyj moj pesok,
Kak nadmenno preziral by
Nedoverchivyi chelnok;
Vsyo, chem tak gordyatsya lyudi,
Moj nabeg by razrushal;
I k moej studenoj grudi
Ya b stradalytsev prizhimal;
Ne strashilsya b muki ada,
Raem ne byl by prel'shchen;
Bespokojstvo i prokhlada
Byli b vechnyj moj zakon;
Ne iskal by ya zabven'ya
V dal'nom severnom krayu;
Byl by volen ot rozhden'ya
zhit' i konchit' zhizn' moyu![129]

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[128] Simon Frith, "Music and Identity," in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage Publications, 1996) , 124.

[129] Mikhail Lermontov, "Dlya chego ya ne rodilsya," in Liberman, 92.

What a pity that the Maker
Who created sea and shore
Do not let me be a breaker
Ever tossing with a roar
I would come, a free born rebel,
To the sand behind the cliff;
I would fondle every pebble
But despise the timid skiff.
I would wildly hunt my quarry,
I would drown it and destroy,
But the sufferers I'd carry
On my liquid breast with joy;
I would laugh at pains inferno,
Paradise would leave me cool;
Streaming restlessness eternal
Would remain my only rule;
Then I would not seek oblivion
In a distant northern clime
I would die, or I'd be living
Anyplace and anytime.[130]

The wave is a symbol of genuine freedom not limited to space or time. The wave resists limitation, consoles the suffering, and rejects the spineless. The poem's meter rises and falls, rearing up and crashing down like the sound of the water. In a time of repression, Lermontov has chosen a very powerful symbol of ultimate freedom.

The waves of Lermontov are found again in Tsoi's "Muzyka voln / Music of the Waves:"

Ya vizhu kak volny smyvayut sledy na peske
Ya slyshu kak veter poyot svoyu strannuyu pesnyu
Ya slyshu kak struny derev'ev ugrayut eyo
Muzyku voln muzyku vetra

Zdes' trudno skazat' chto takoe asfal't
Zdes' trudno skazat' chto takoe mashina
Zdes' nuzhno rukami kidat' vodu vverkh
Muzyka voln muzyka verta

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[130] Mikhail Lermontov,"What a Pity that the Maker," in Ibid, 93.

Kto iz vas vspomnit o tekh kto sbilsya s dorogi
Kto iz vas vspomnit o tekh kto smeyalsya i pel
Kto iz vas vspomnit chuvstvuya kholod priklada
Muzyku voln muzyku verta?[131]

I see how the waves wash away the tracks in the sand,
I hear how the wind sings its strange song,
I hear how the strings of the trees play with it,
Music of the waves, music of the wind.

It's difficult to say what is asphalt here
It's difficult to say what is a car here.
Here it's necessary to throw the water up with your hands.
Music of the waves, music of the wind.

Who of you remembers those who were brought this way?
Who of you remembers those who laughed and sang?
Who of you recalls feeling the cold butt of a gun,
Music of the waves, music of the wind?

Viktor Tsoi recorded this song twice. The first version(1983) is slow and simply arranged with heavily distorted guitar, bass and a vocal expressively coloured by the use of sustain. The resulting hazy quality of sound conjures up the echoes of wind and water. The song speaks of waves as a witness to history, and as a force that brings clarity and strength. The last verse is striking as it suggests the brutal actions of the Soviet past. Yet it seems that these unnamed victims survived their torment through laughter and song. Tsoi probably wrote the song in 1982. His wife writes that it was during a time when both of them yearned to be something else. He told Marianna not to go back to school and instead they took off to the Black Sea for a month, selling their books and belongings to pay for the tickets.[132] Their reluctance to stay put and accept their lives is just another example of the

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[131] Viktor Tsoi, "Musyka voln," 46;"Musyka voln," *Eto ne lyubov';* Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 303.

[132] M. Tsoi, "Tochka otschyota", in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 9-11.

restlessness many youth felt under the repressive norms of everyday Soviet life. While Tsoi camped by the sea he spent the time writing music as well as listening to illegal tapes, records and anything on rock that he could get.[133] The music of the waves brought him the motivation and a sense of clarity to prepare him to rise to his potential.

The second recording is longer and very different from the first. The tempo is quicker and the full band sound is positively upbeat. Tsoi's voice is stronger and certain, and there is no sustain or reverb[134] on the vocal. This new declamation changes the mood to one that leaves the listener with a feeling that the waves are active and not mere bystanders. Perhaps the passing of few years created this new interpretation by Tsoi. On 11 March 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev became the new General Secretary of the USSR. That year Gorbachev made some notable changes in leadership, appointing figures that had a more reformative attitude. However, Gorbachev's Glasnost, also announced that year, was not evident in the public sphere until late 1986 and early 1987. Rehabilitation of those imprisoned or murdered under Stalin was not officially announced until November 1987. What had noticeably changed for Viktor Tsoi at the time of 1985 was the release of pressure from the rock crackdowns of the previous years making it easier to meet to record extra instrumentation. Yet, the new laxity, in addition to the appointment of a younger leader, would perhaps have been cause enough for a lighter more hopeful

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[133] Ibid, 10-11.

[134] Sustain is a sound effect that is used to enhance the sound by creating a lingering quality. Reverb creates a mixture of distortion and echo. Some electronic equipment have these options, or the effects may be added with the use of a specialized sound board and mixer in the recording studio, or for those lesser equipped a little creative ingenuity can produce interesting results.

mood. The music is happier because of the shift in atmosphere resulting from the shift in power. The two arrangements taken together allude to the increasing power and freedom of music and the individual.

Like Lermontov, Tsoi admires the ultimate and eternal freedom and power of the waves, and despises those who choose to be pushed along. The song of the waves is a song about becoming your own master. In Lermontov's poem own can wish to be like the waves or one can be content being a "timid skiff." Music and sound play a key role in the development of internal freedom.

Like Lermontov, Tsoi envisioned himself becoming or wishing to become freedom. Such is the song "Stan' ptitsej / Become a Bird:"

Stan' ptitsej zhivushchej v moyom nebe
Pomni chto net tyur'my strashnee chem v golove
Stan' ptitsej ne dumaj o khlebe
Ya stanu dorogoj

Ya pomnyu prozrachnost' vody morya
Ya vizhu prozrachnost' goryashchego gaza
Stan' serdtsem v moyom tele
Ya stanu krov'yu

Ya budu delat' vsyo kak umeyu
Stan' knigoj lozhis' v moi ruki
Stan' pesnej zhivi na moikh gubakh
Ya stanu slovami[135]

Become a bird, living in my sky
Remember that there's no prison more terrible than your head
Become a bird, don't think about bread
I become the way.

[135] Viktor Tsoi, "Stan' ptitsej," *46*; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 345.

I remember the clearness of the sea water
I see the clearness of the burning gas
Become the heart in my body
I become the blood.

I will do everything that I'm able to
Become a book in my hands
Become the song alive on my lips
I become the words.

The recording consists of only Tsoi singing a simple melody to the accompaniment of his gently plucked guitar. The first two words of each verse are delivered slowly, as the notes of this part of the melody are of longer duration. These beginning words of each phrase are filled with action – the development of freedom. "Pomni, chto net tyur'my strashnee, chem v golove / Remember that there's no prison more terrible than your head." True freedom is not external but internal. Tsoi once said that art (film, music, painting) was the key to creating understanding, and that rock music did have the potential to help solve problems.[136] Yet he never provided the answers to his listeners, rather his songs and his life encouraged individual choice and the development of responsibility. A life of artistic expression, of internal resistance, was attractive to those who were tired of ideology and rebellion. It is an individual freedom, yet Tsoi's voice requests that his listeners join him in this new forum. He provides the body and the words but asks those who listen to become the song.

Shortly after the death of Viktor Tsoi, a public candle vigil took place in Leningrad. Footage of the event,[137] showing thousands of grieving youth, is witness

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[136] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Argumenty i fakty*, No.39, 1987, 198.

[137] Klip 9 "Kukushka," in *Chelovek v chyornom*, CD-ROM (Moscow: Sozdannuyu tvorcheskoj gruppoj "A-TATA",1990-91).

to the strength of Viktor Tsoi's appeal. At one point in the concert, slides of Tsoi's musical and personal life are viewed as his song "Kukushka /The Cuckoo" plays. The audience cries and sings along to these words:

Pesen eshche ne napisannykh skol'ko
Skazhi kukushka
Propoj
V gorode mne zhit' ili na vyselkakh
Kamnem lezhat'
Ili goret' zvezdoj
Zvezdoj

Solntse moyo vzglyani na menya
Moya ladon' prevratilas' v kulak
I esli est porokh daj ognya
Vot tak

Kto pojdyot po sledu odinokomu
Sil'nye da smelye golovy slozhili v pole
V boyu
Malo kto ostalsya v svetloj pamyati
V trezvom ume da s tverdoj rukoj v stroyu
V stroyu

Solntse moyo vzglyani na menya
Moya ladon' prevratilas' v kulak
I esli est porokh daj ognya
Vot tak

Gde zhe gde teper' volya vol'naya
S kem zhe ty sejchas laskovyj rassvet vstrechaesh'
Otvet'
Khorosho s toboj da plokho bez tebya
Golovu da plechi terpelivye pod plet'
Plod plet'

Solntse moyo vzglyani na menya
Moya ladon' prevratilas' v kulak
I esli est porokh daj ognya
Vot tak[138]

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[138] Viktor Tsoi, "Kukushka," *Chyornyj al'bom*, performed by Kino, recorded 1990, Yuri Kasparyan, Igor Tikhomirov (Producers), re-mastered at Studio MMD, Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 339-340.

How many songs are there still to sing?
Tell me cuckoo
Sing.
Am I to live in the city or on the move,
Lying on the ground
Or burning bright as a star.
As a star.

My sun – look down on me,
My hand has turned into a fist,
And if there's gunpowder – give me fire.
Like this.

Who will walk along these solitary steps?
Strong and brave, lives are laid down in the field-
In the battle.
There are few who remain in our memory,
With a sound mind, with strong hands in the service.
In the service.

My sun – look down on me,
My hand has turned into a fist,
And if there's gunpowder – give me fire.
Like this.

Where are you now, free will?
With whom are you already meeting at gentle daybreak?
Tell me.
It's good with you, but bad without,
My head on my shoulders can hold out under the whip.
Under the whip.

My sun – look down on me,
My hand has turned into a fist,
And if there's gunpowder – give me fire.
Like this.

Simple drumming, sustained synthesizer chords and a subtle bass, provide the background for an uncomplicated melodic guitar solo, which provides a memorable Leitmotiv to the song. Tsoi begins to sing in the minor mode and the rhythm and sound of each phrase are poignant. It is easy to picture a Lermontov-like solitary walk and feelings of disquiet. Tsoi's first words are concern about the music: how

many more songs? The song is synonymous with life and the continuation of life. The next verse is concern about who will continue the song. Who is the next to walk alone? Tsoi worries about the need to be strong, the need for free will, and yet he ends the song with some resolve to hold out – to survive the whip. He is no slave. The chorus is one of resistance: "My hand has turned into a fist, / And if there's gunpowder – give me fire." He continually must find and declare his will to be free. This resistance comes at a cost. Tsoi sings of sacrifice and tells of lives lost in the battle and the need to "hold out under the whip." Choosing freedom brings serious responsibility.

This song is interesting as it was recorded in 1989- 90 and most likely written around that time. Why was Tsoi still concerned about servitude when freedom and change could be seen? After all, this was the time of the destruction of the Berlin Wall, which had been a symbol of suppression, physically dividing the public and individuals from each other. Perhaps Tsoi was concerned with the pressures of new freedoms – the never-ending need to make personal choices and to push against mediocrity and to "hold out." Glasnost was a difficult time, as many believed that they were powerless,[139] it was a time of struggle against the silence they had grown used to.[140] Glasnost reforms allowed the individual the chance to speak out yet many people still fought against "artificial limitations" that they or the society around them created to feel secure.[141] For those in the rock community it meant the challenge of

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[139]Fran Markowitz, "Not Nationalists: Russian Teenagers' Soulful A-Politics", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No.7 (November, 1999) : 1194.

[140] Melville and Lapidus, 36.

[141] Ibid, 48.

resisting compromise as a new entertainment structure arose.[142] "The need for heroes is still more necessary than ever." is what Tsoi stated in 1989 while in discussion on glasnost.[143] Choosing to resist, choosing to be one's own hero, was necessary.

In this song, one of his last, Tsoi was still concerned with the theme of the relationship of the independent and the collective and the value of free will. He saw a way to resist. Tsoi said, "But rock music for me, as it is for an enormous mass of young people, is completely natural and organic form of originality. There is nothing of the made for the market consumption about it. Only you, your conscience, is your chief critic and censor."[144] Music allows true freedom, a place to begin to resist external limitations, real or imaginary. Music allows the individual to choose his/her own path and to make his/her own choices in a world that often makes little sense.

The image of Viktor Tsoi as an individual that has taken up the cause of the personal over the public is an exciting and attractive figure that reaches back to the image of Russia's Lermontov. These two lyrical writers of different eras share a basic belief in the development of the solitary hero. Their personal images and creative works reveal champions for truth in irrational and deceptive worlds. Their heroes push out against the status quo, finding power and life in artistic sensibility.

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[142] Troitsky, *Back in the USSR,* 137-138.

[143] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Sovetskaya molodezh',* Riga, 6 May 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 206.

[144] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Novyj fil'm,* March 1988, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 202.

Chapter 2

The Legend: Viktor Tsoi and the Soviet Heroic Tradition

Viktor Tsoi's song "Legenda /The Legend" conjures up an image of the *bogatyr'i*, the epic Slavic warriors, at the conclusion of a battle. This song is placed significantly at the end of Tsoi's band Kino's most political album, *Gruppa krovi / Blood Group* so that the listener may assume that, because of this special position, it holds an important key to Tsoi's philosophy of life and what he considered to be heroic. Tsoi has chosen to end with the beginning, the first notion of hero in the Slavic tradition. By listening to this album it becomes clear that his notion of hero is connected to the Soviet ideal and that the context of time is a significant factor in artistic creation.

This chapter examines how Viktor Tsoi's heroic image was shaped by the Soviet era: the Soviet hero and its symbols are part of the dialogue in Tsoi's expositions. While Tsoi's image and philosophy are connected to Lermontov's romanticism, he is undoubtedly shaped by the context of his own time. Both the Soviet hero and Lermontov's romantic heroes rely on the use of older traditions and symbols. While these heroic types share some very similar points, they are two different philosophical manifestations of the old tradition. The conflict between the collective and the individual can be witnessed in the dialogue found in Tsoi's lyrics.

In Katerina Clark's examination of the Soviet novel, her central thesis is that the Soviet novel plays a role in the "ritual of history" by repeating meanings through the use of master plots and key characterization, which then codify significant

cultural categories.[1] The development of the Soviet novel shows history in motion as a kind of anthropological ritual that actually allows participants (readers), whether they agree or not with the meanings represented, to join in that history making.[2] She defends this theory by showing that literary history and Soviet histories are deeply connected. Socialist Realism reveals that the novel and the reality are interdependent as the literary style and the dominant ideologies promote and create each other.[3] Morris presents a similar idea when she asserts that the old clichés, specifically of the ascetic hero from Orthodox religious literature, manage to persist due to the relationship between ideology and the word in Russian and Soviet literature and even into the Soviet underground.[4] Whether it is an account of the life of a saint or a hero in a revolutionary tract or novel, the hero chooses a path of promoting an ideal and ultimately dying in its service. Heroes are used to retain the ideology and order in the historical reality.

It is understandable that the Soviet regime would continue to use a literary form proven to have power; employing familiar symbols in order to legitimize the new formal position.[5] Drawing upon the first written heroic tales, the Orthodox Lives of the Saints, the new regime used the hagiographic formula of a hero with a conversion, a new family (companions, followers and mentors) and the hero's

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[1] Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel, History as Ritual*, Third Edition (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000) , 9.

[2] Ibid, 9.

[3] Ibid, 253.

[4] Marcia A. Morris, *Saints and Revolutionaries, the Ascetic Hero in Russian Literature* (New York: State University of New York, 1993) , 31.

[5] Clark , 48.

ultimate demise as a martyr for his enlightened cause. This formula was useful because the Soviet novel was required to teach just as hagiography had done. It made sense to reuse a formula that worked well. The difference is that Socialist Realism used the formula to teach and promote an exclusively political rather than spiritual force.[6] However, the ascetic hero was useful to both church and state as an example of the promotion of the public over the private.[7] The tension between the collective and the individual is at the heart of the Soviet heroic image.

Although the hagiographic form is primarily didactic, it is not unrealistic to assume that Tsoi would use familiar Soviet heroic images in his text. Like the written word, oral tradition and song codify cultural meaning; helping to put history into action and perhaps even dictate the direction reality takes. The ideological connection that exists in the literary tradition is acknowledged in song. Underground culture and official culture are not so far removed, as both would have exposure to the same traditions and may be seen as part of the same social dialogue. Tsoi would have grown up reading required Soviet literature in which he would have encountered the familiar voice of the positive man of action, a reworking of the secular epic oral tradition and the religious ascetic type. In addition to scholastic exposure this type of hero was particularly appealing at the time. People longed for the ascetic hero as this kind of simplicity became very appealing in an increasingly

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[6] Ibid, 251.

[7] Ibid, 162.

modern world.[8] This kind of hero offers action against the norms of society and that is why he is so attractive in times of struggle, confusion or uncertainty.[9] Zakharov, a developer of the television program *Vzglyad /View*, a show created and popular at the time of Tsoi, argues for the magnetism of simplicity stating that it is necessary to use simple language in relating to the public "due to the many years of 'distorted psychology'."[10] Therefore the soothing familiar clichés inserted into a simple form like rock music were ideal for the uncertain and changing times youth were facing. This simple type of hero, the ascetic, which pushes against established institutions, is also "much more suited to the storms of history than its calms which debilitate heroes."[11] This heroic ideal was therefore a suitable match to the period of Glasnost, a time of changes and confusion.

To see the similarities and differences between Tsoi's heroic image and that found in the Soviet novel, we compare his works, with special focus on the album[12]

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[8] Morris, 133.
The appeal of the ascetic is evident in the example of the creation of the legend of Tsoi himself. Tsoi's fans longed for a certain type of hero and after Tsoi's death they formed their own legend and idol. Yuri Domanskij relates that the unexpected loss of Tsoi led many followers to fantasize possible reasons for Tsoi's death in order to meet the traditional molds of Orthodox saint and sacrificial value of death. Domanskij, 26, 29-31 .

[9] Morris, 186.

[10] Hedrick Smith, *The New Russians* (New York: Random House, 1990) , 167.

[11] Morris, 186.

[12] Before 1987 there was no real "album" in Soviet rock. Contrary to an "album" where the songs are united in a conceptual collection, recordings in the Soviet Union were often concerts on tape or whatever songs the musicians were able to record given the materials, musicians, and time available to them at these clandestine studios. See Andrei Tropillo, interview by Y. B. Steinholt, 11 June 2002, at AnTrop studio and record plant, Ulitsa Tsvetochnaia, St. Petersburg, at www.hf.uib.no/i/russik/steinholt.rir_files.html, 11.

Gruppa krovi, to an officially recognized template of the trend of Socialist Realism, Fyodor Gladkov's novel *Cement*. Gladkov (1883-1958) was primary a self-taught writer who had grown up in an impoverished Old Believer colony. In his "Autobiographical Note," he relates a story of his rise in literature thanks to the Revolution.[13] Gladkov is one of the authors that represent the start of Soviet literature of the new Soviet Union and *Cement* is recognized as one of the first examples of the official literary style. Comparing this book to Tsoi's lyrics permits an analysis of the heroic ideal at the beginning and at the end of the Soviet era. It provides a glimpse into what heroic symbols and characteristics were retained and what was reshaped. Gladkov also wrote that, "Lermontov . . . intoxicated me."[14] This love for Lermontov indicates that an early template of Soviet literature was possibly influenced by Lermontov's writings. In fact, "industrial or active romanticism" as opposed to the "individualistic or passive romanticism" was considered compatible with the revolution.[15] This meant that the hero stresses action over ideals, and the collective over the individual.[16] Soviet academics even made efforts to prove that Lermontov was a progressive romantic.[17] The question arises how Gladkov and Tsoi

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[13] Fyodor Vasilievich Gladkov, "Autobiographical Note," in A. S. Arthur and C. Ashleigh (trans.), *Cement* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1980) , v-vi.

[14] Gladkov, "Autobiographical Note," v.

[15] Morris, 158; Robert Reid, "Russian Theories of Romanticism," in Robert Reid (ed.), *Problems of Russian Romanticism* (Brookfield, Vermont: Gower Publishing Company Limited, 1986) , 4.

[16] Clark, 66; Reid, 4.

[17] Reid, 4.

differed in the application of Lermontov to their own creative work. Analysis will conclude in illuminating how different historical contexts shaped each interpretation of the heroic ideal.

Focus is primarily on Tsoi's 1988 album *Gruppa krovi* because it was considered "the major cultural event of cultural life" at the end of the Glasnost era.[18] This statement was verified by the passing of time, as it was recently voted the number one rock album of all Soviet and post-Soviet rock by the popular radio station *Nashe Radio / Our Radio*,[19] recognizing it as an ideal in Russian rock or as a kind of template to follow, and an album that best represents the golden era of Soviet rock. At the time of the album, Tsoi's popularity was rapidly growing and the group was noted for its steady following.[20] The album was written between 1986 and 1988 a time particularly important as it falls into the period of Glasnost. This means that the album, although still not recognized as official rock music, was more readily available and its songs could express ideas freely. In 1988, journalist Feliks Aksentsev wrote that *Gruppa krovi* included texts that were "more heroic than usual."[21] The lyrics were also acknowledged, in that same year, as being of a higher poetic style than in previous years.[22] Therefore, the text of *Gruppa krovi* may be seen as a mature example of Tsoi's work, reflecting his evolved philosophy.

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[18] Mikhail Shlyamovich, "Interesnoe 'Kino' Viktora Tsoya i ego povoroty," *Sovetskaya Estoniya*, 6 January 1989, in Marianna Tsoi and Alexander Zhitinskij, eds. *Viktor Tsoi: stikhi, dokumenty vospominaniya* (St. Petersburg: Novi Helikon, 1991) , 230.

[19] "Vse Nashe," *Nashe radio,* 13 October 2004, <http://www.nashe.ru>

[20] Marianna Tsoi, "Tochka otschyota," in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 31.

[21] Feliks Aksentsev, "Den' v 'Kino'," in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 220.

[22] Evgennij Dodolev, "Nachal'nik 'Kamchatki'," in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 216.

The familiar plot outline found in all Soviet novels is used to compare Tsoi with Gladkov, and to locate the heroic characteristics specific to each heroic tradition. The basic master plot is: firstly, the hero arrives at a changed place where he gains the special ability to see that "all is not good;" secondly, he chooses to mobilize the people and work hard to confront the problems; thirdly, he overcomes his self-doubt and possibly a major external threat; fourthly, he gets strength from the people (perhaps from a mentor or by becoming a mentor to others); and lastly the hero transcends his self, and at this last stage there usually is celebration of the completed task or of the death.[23]

Gladkov begins his novel with Gleb Chumalov, a civil war soldier, returning after three years to his village. Chumalov expects to see that his people are receiving the equality promised to them and soon finds out that things are grim. The task of uniting the village and creating a better life through the rejuvenation of a cement factory takes central position, despite his eventual personal loss of wife, child and home. Gleb is characterized as a man who learns to place the value of the group over himself, believing that his loss is necessary for the benefit of the group.

This value of the group over the individual requires that the Soviet hero must be part of that group, a kind of everyday man but with extraordinary strength to lead the cause. Throughout Gladkov's novel, the people around Gleb repeatedly acknowledge that he is "one of us" or *nashe* (ours). Chumalov understands their reality because he himself experiences the same life struggles.

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[23] Clark, 255-260.

Tsoi is also recognized as this kind of everyday hero. Many of Tsoi's songs use daily life for subject matter. Troitsky, a leading figure in the Russian creative community, remarks that Tsoi has the ability to remain part of the group, in his case the teen crowd: "Tsoi was still a teenager only yesterday and at heart remained one still. His world is sincere, full of confusion and rather defenseless. He wants to be grown up and sarcastic but reality continues to surprise him."[24] Tsoi has the ability to see the world through fresh eyes. He remains a part of his audience, and this sincerity is what makes him a hero. On 17 August 1990, *Komsomolskaya pravda* included an article on the recent death of Tsoi:

> For the younger generation of our country Tsoi means more than any political leaders, celebrities and writers because Tsoi never lied and never pretended to be more than he was. He was and remained himself. It was impossible for people not to believe him.
> Of all our rock legends, wonderful singers and poets Tsoi – only, was the one for whom it was impossible to set a line between image and reality. He sang as he lived.[25]

Tsoi is characterized as being the only one (*edinstvennyi*) able to maintain both his authenticity and his image. He is simply an honest hero. This is the same honest sincerity that makes Gleb a true hero. He is a common man with the knowledge of the reality of everyday life.

This experiential knowledge or awareness is what makes the hero. However, like the saints that Socialist Realism copied, the Soviet hero's understanding goes further and the hero soon reveals that he has secret or insider wisdom; a kind of clarity. This is similar to Lermontov's ability to see and to reveal truth as discussed in

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[24] Artemy Troitsky, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia* (Winchester, MA: Faber and Faber, 1987) , 79.

[25] *Komsomolskaya pravda*, 17 August 1990.

Chapter One.[26] Lermontov writes of his personal experience or in terms of his own generation. Lermontov, Tsoi, and Gladkov's hero Gleb all strive to provide accurate criticism of their eras based on their own experience. This type of knowledge is part of the awareness that the hero obtains during his initial awakening, a knowledge that provides strength. In *Cement*, Kleist, an intellectual engineer whom Gleb Chumalov must recruit to help in his factory campaign, cannot grasp Gleb's knowledge and stands in awe of him. Gleb is described wearing his civil war helmet making him look very much like a *bogatyr'*:

> Out of what world was the new culture which this workman Gleb Chumalov brought with him? He, resurrected from blood, was fearless and unconquerable and strength lay in his dread eyes. And when Gleb had smiled to-day at their meeting, there was an unplumbed profundity in that smile – a knowledge which Kleist could not seize. And his strange helmet was part of this indefinable significance and the face and the helmet were one.
> An obstinate sinister face – an obstinate sinister helmet.
> This helmet stressed the menacing present. Beyond the helmet and face of Gleb Chumalov there was nothing at all.[27]

Central to this image of strength is the civil war helmet Gleb wears. This type of hat is particularly shaped like the helmets of the *bogatyr'i*. Gladkov is relying on the familiar symbol of strength and courage to add power to his hero Gleb. Through this image, Gleb is connected to a tradition of hero central to folk knowledge. This position within folk knowledge gives Gleb a position of authority over the people, while allowing him to truly be one of them. The *bogatyr'* is the ultimate image of the strength and action in Slavic culture. By using this image a strong message is sent. In the Russian theorist Bakhtin's essay on the epic versus the novel, Bakhtin highlights that an epic hero draws upon an absolute past and helps to create an

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[26] Chapter One, 32-30.

[27] Gladkov, 84.

understanding of the past as sacred and a source of all that is good – where nothing is left to challenge.[28] Therefore by portraying Gleb as such a figure he is connected with absolutes – he must win because his character has been given this kind of power. In the same way, Tsoi's song "Legenda / The Legend" helps to create this kind of image of mythic power in Tsoi and judging from his popularity and the comments on his sincerity – Tsoi's strength is plausible. Yet what provides both the actualization of this strength and the clarity or wisdom? The answer is the hero's love of work.

Work is what the everyday man knows and through that reality or special understanding of that reality the hero gains strength. In both Gladkov's and Tsoi's portrayal of hero, work is seen as something dear and significant. The awakened hero remains a worker, as daily work is the root of action while permitting the hero to stay among the people and even assisting him to become more aware. In the old stories of the saints, work was a central part of the spiritual awakening.

In *Cement*, Gleb equates work to a freedom worth fighting for: "Fresh work. Free work, gained in struggle, won through fire and blood. Splendid!"[29] His main cause is getting the factory running. Machinery takes centre position in this novel and Gleb clearly is refreshed by his work. There is one passage that is particularly memorable because this love of the workplace is well portrayed as Gleb visits the engine room of the factory:

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[28] Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel" in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin,* Michael Holquist (ed.), Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (trans.), (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1992) , 14-17.

[29] Gladkov, 2.

> Every day Gleb visited the engine-room, and here the influence of the place transformed him . . . . In the air was a tender singing hum from the pistols and wheels . . . . This severe and youthful music of metal, amid the warm smell of oil and petrol, strengthened and soothed Gleb's being. These gentle songs seemed to re-echo within his heart. Everything beyond those walls seemed insignificant, petty, rubbish which should be thrown away. Only here could one find that which was essential, vital, significant – amid the gentle ringing, and the sighing of these black alters standing so firmly in compact squares. From behind the safety-barrier, he would gaze long at the gigantic fly-wheels, at the broad red belts, running as on wings, and palpitating as if alive. Near the fly-wheels, so illusive and almost alarming in their silence, hot moist air-waves flooded over Gleb's hands and chest. Fascinated, he would lose all consciousness of time, his mind absorbed in this iron flight; and he would stand there, regardless of outer life, without thought.[30]

Gleb is invigorated by the machine and through the sounds of work. The factory is vital to his existence.

It is possible to interpret Tsoi as exhibiting a belief that regular work was vital.[31] This is one characteristic that really sets Tsoi apart from other Soviet rock musicians, like the significant rock icon Boris Grebenshchikov who wished "to be occupied only with creative work."[32] Tsoi's "dream came true" when he became a stoker in a boiler room, and although he was very popular he really enjoyed and loved hard work.[33] Answering a question on how to be content in life, Tsoi replied,

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[30] Gladkov, 286.

[31] There are many possible interpretations of Tsoi's lyrics. This particular interpretation utilizes Tsoi's words from interviews. It is acknowledged that Tsoi disliked interviews and therefore words that he stated should not always be taken in the literal sense. This is why the opinion of those closest to him is used in order to obtain a clearer understanding of the historic Tsoi's views. The position of irony should still be acknowledged, as many of his songs are full of irony. However, even an ironic treatment of the theme of work is evidence that the Soviet reality is a part of Tsoi's heroic dialogue.

[32] M. Tsoi, "Tochka otschyota," 15.

[33] Ibid, 32.

"I don't think that man is able to really be content in life . . . On the other hand, I was always content with it. And when I worked at the boiler room and threw coal into the oven, I was content with life."[34] To be fair, a job at a boiler room was a desirable one for an unofficial musician in the Soviet Union. The work was physically challenging and the hours long, but the job was in shifts that allowed days off at a time. This meant more time for creative work. Soviet rock musicians, prior to Glasnost, were not all legally recognized by law and were therefore required to have an officially recognized job. So it was not uncommon for many musicians to be working a blue-collar job while achieving fame. However, even after his success in film and the continuance of radical Glasnost policy, when rock musicians could apply for official work status, Tsoi continued to work up until his death in 1990. It seems he valued work as part of what brings true contentment.

This love for his work is evident early in such songs as "Khochu kochegarom / I Wanna be a Stoker"[35] and "Kamchatka / Kamchatka". Kamchatka, the nickname for the boiler room where he worked, is arguably his sweetest sounding song, almost as if it is a love song. Gleb's almost romantic reflection of a man's love for an engine room is repeated in Tsoi's song about a boiler room:

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[34] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Sovetskaya Molodezh',* Riga, 6 May 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 208-209.

[35] Viktor Tsoi, "Khochu konchegarom," 46, performed by Kino, recorded 1983, Aleksej Vishnya (Producer), re-mastered at Studio SBI. Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD.

O eto strannoe mesto - Kamchatka
O eto sladkoe slovo - Kamchatka

No na etoj zemle ya ne vizhu tebya
Ya ne vizhu tvoikh korablej
Ya ne vizhu reki ya ne vizhu mosta
Ya pytayus' najti loshadej
[I pust'...]

O eto strannoe mesto - Kamchatka
O eto sladkoe slovo - Kamchatka

Ya nashel zdes' rudu
Yanashel zdes' lyubov'
Ya pytayus' zabyt' zabyvayu i vnov'
Vspominayu sobaku ona kak zvezda
Ya naverno suda ne vernus' nikogda
[Nu i pust'...]

O eto strannoe mesto - Kamchatka
O eto sladkoe slovo - Kamchatka

Ya ne vizhu zdes' ikh
Ya ne vizhu zdes' nas
Ya iskal zdes' vino a nashyol tretij glaz
Moj ruki iz duba golova iz svintsa
Ya ne znayu smogu li dopet' do kontsa
[Hu i pust'...][36]

Oh, such a strange place, "Kamchatka"
Oh, such a sweet word, "Kamchatka".

But on this earth I don't see you,
I don't see your ships,
I don't see a river or a bridge,
I try to find a horse.
[Well, let it be...]

Oh, such a strange place, "Kamchatka",
Oh, such a sweet word, "Kamchatka".

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[36] Viktor Tsoi, "Kamchatka,"46, performed by Kino, recorded 1983, Aleksej Vishnya (Producer), re-mastered at Studio SBI. Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD; Viktor Tsoi, "Kamchatka," *Nachal'nik Kamchatki,* performed by Kino, recorded 1984, 1986, Andrey Tropillo (Producer), re-mastered at Studio MMC, (Moscow: Moroz Records, 1998) CD; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 229-230.

I've found rich ore here,
I've found love here,
I tried to forget, and I did, but once again
I remember that dog, it's like a star,
I'll probably never return here ever
[So let it be...]

Oh, such a strange place, "Kamchatka",
Oh, such a sweet word, "Kamchatka".

I don't see them here
I don't see us here,
I was looking for wine, and found a third eye,
My hands are made of oak, my head from lead,
I don't know if I'm able to keep singing until the end
[So let it be...]

This song was recorded twice by Viktor Tsoi, evidence that he considered it an important song and worthy of recording again. The second recording from 1986 has been chosen, as it is the most recent and was released during Glasnost. While the lyrics to this song are a bit cryptic, relying on the listener to know what "Kamchatka" refers to, the music in the 1986 recording sounds very much like a workplace. The percussion, keys, bass and guitar play off each other to sound as if a machine is turning, pistons puffing, and electricity humming. Over this, Tsoi and Kino sing in harmony "Oh." Like Gleb, the listener is soothed by the machinery and losing track of time. Tsoi's lyrics indicate that although he does not see ships and bridges on earth, they suggest that he is able to have a kind of refuge in a strange exotic land. In reality, the Kamchatka peninsula is a far eastern expansion in Siberia, touching the Pacific Ocean and located north of Japan. It was used as a target for missile testing during the Cold War, in addition to use as an important submarine military base. For much of the Soviet era travel to the area was forbidden. Perhaps the remoteness, the inaccessibility and the strategic background of the real Kamchatka, is what prompted the workers at the boiler room to call it such a name. This is their

own "testing ground," it is a place of shelter and strength. Here they are free to purse their internal lives. Here, each may claim individual autonomy.

The last line of each verse are not sung in this recording, instead the bracketed lines "I pust' / and so let it be," are sung. The effect of not singing these lines:"Ya pytayus' najti loshadej / I try to find horses," Ya naverno suda ne vernus' nikogda / I'll probably never return here ever," and "Ya ne znayu smogu li dopet' do kontsa / I don't know if I'm able to keep singing until the end," and instead singing "let it be" provide the expression of a more positive mood. Tsoi will have enough strength to sing until the end. The music is dreamlike and even the percussion is actually quite sweet. Kamchatka provides Tsoi with what he looks for - love - but also what is beyond him: "[on] nashyol tretij glaz" (he found a third eye). It seems to mean that he gains insight through this "third eye," and perhaps like Gleb he is transformed and revitalized. The hero gains clarity of mind and is awakened to see what must be done.

There is a significant distinction in the hero's interpretation of the value of work. Unlike Gleb, Tsoi is not "regardless of outer life, without thought." Tsoi's clarity comes from this remote place – a place far from reality, yet a part of reality. Tsoi's lyrics are inner thought. His work is a place where he is free to consider his personal freedom. For Gleb, his place of work represents his goal – the accomplishment of the collective. Gladkov is writing at the beginning of the Soviet era when the excitement of progress and change was fresh. This is not to say that everyone was excited and joined in the work, rather it was more as Gladkov expressed in his book – people were scared and resisted, even if their defiance

meant death. However, Gleb is a dynamic figure that honestly expressed the heroic ideal and excitement of the age.

Tsoi's generation had become tired of the old Soviet expressions and focus on labour.[37] For many youth, the first experience in the work place was where they became disillusioned with Soviet reality.[38] Many chose to work meaningless jobs so that they could have more time for their leisure activities. The love of work then for Tsoi and his generation, is similar to Gladkov's in the sense that the workplace provides an awakening, a sense of clarity. In contrast, work does not represent the goal but a means to develop or have time for individual accomplishments outside of the workplace.

This is similar to Lermontov's heroes who choose to devote themselves to solitary activities that are outside the workings of society. As noted in Chapter One, Lermontov wrote of his own youthful experience with the education and offerings of Imperial society; how there was no opportunity:

> Pover', nichtozhestvo est' blago v zdeshnem svete.
> K chemu glubokie poznan'ya, zhazhda slavy,
> Talant i pylkaya lyubov' svobody,
> Kogda my ikh upotrebit' ne mozhem?[39]

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[37] Paul Easton, " The Rock Music Community," in James Riordan ed., *Soviet Youth Culture,* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1989) , 65.

[38] Andrew Wilson and Nina Bachkatov, eds., *Living With Glasnost: Youth and Society in a Changing Russia* (London: Penguin, 1988) , 82-83.

[39] Mikhail Lermontov, "Monolog", in Anatoly Liberman trans., *Mikhail Lermontov: Major Poetical Works* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983) , 34.

Yes, mediocrity among us is a blessing.
What use are pride in deeper knowledge, lust for glory,
Unflinching love of liberty, and talent,
If in our world not one of us can use them![40]

All three writers express sound as means of motivation. Gleb, and Tsoi in "Kamchatka," listen to the machines, the praise of the industrial is a part of the Soviet era, whereas Lermontov's heroes take solace in natural sounds and in music. Sound plays a key role in gaining the ability to recognize truth.

Lermontov's own awakening to the truth occurred with the death of Pushkin. In the conclusion of his poem about the death of Pushkin, entitled "Smert' poeta / The Poet's Death" Lermontov curses his own society:

A vy, nadmennye potomki
Izvestnoj podlost'yu proslavlennykh otsov,
Pyatoyu rabskoyu popravshie oblomki
Igriyu schastiya obizhennykh rodov!
Vy, zhadnoyu tolpoj stoyashchie u trona,
Svobody, Geniya i Slavy palachi!
Taites' vy pod seniyu zakona,
Pred vami sud i Pravda – vsyo molchi!..
No est' i bozhij sud, napersniki razvrata!
Est' groznij sud: on zhdet;
On ne dostupen zvonu zlata,
I mysli i dela on znaet napered.
Togda naprasno vy pribegnete k zloslov'yu:
Ono vam ne pomozhet vnov',
I vy ne smoete vsej vashej chernoj krov'yu
Poeta pravednuyu krov'![41]

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[40] Mikhail Lermontov, "A Monologue", in Ibid, 35.

[41] Mikhail Lermontov, "Smert' poeta," in Ibid, 108, 110.

And you, so arrogant and bloated,
Whose fathers' villainy has carried far and wide,
You trample underfoot the clans on which you doted
The moment of fortune brushes them aside.
You, greedy, hungry pack, corrupters of the palace,
You, murderers of Freedom, Genius, Fame!
The laws you write have made you bold and callous,
Both truth and justice are for you a game!
But God will judge you all for every crime committed,
Yes, He will judge: He waits;
He will not be by you outwitted:
This time your clinking gold will not avert your fate.
In vain you will pretend that you are smart and clever,
This will not help you anymore;
In all eternity, your loathsome blood will never
Wash off the poet's righteous gore![42]

There is a longing in Lermontov's poetry and prose to exist in another form. As discussed in Chapter One, Lermontov longs for ultimate personal freedom, he resists the norms of society and refuses to subject himself to his society's unfulfilling and negative lifestyle. Lermontov realizes and preaches the truth about the state of things.

Gleb also recognizes the truth: his village is not in good order. At his first meeting with former friends and workers Gleb begins to feel sick because he realizes that the positive changes he has fought for have not come to his village:

> Gleb was silent. He looked at the pale, wasted faces of the workmen, at the dying Gromada, that small man whose name signified business, at Loshak, who was bent down as though under the weight of his angular stony head. Sitting there, silent and weary, he felt that his life was about to take a new path. Everything seemed clear and simple; everything was going on as usual. And yet, deep down in him, moved a dim sadness.[43]

Gleb has fought for improvements in order to enrich these people's lives and yet the reality is that the change has yet to take place.

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[42] Mikhail Lermontov, "The Poet's Death," in Ibid, 109, 111.

[43] Gladkov, 23.

Tsoi also has this perception, as like Gleb he was situated in a time of expected change. In the spring of 1987, when the public was alive with discussion of Glasnost, Tsoi was interviewed and asked why he did not participate in the newly permitted official rock. He replied that he refused to take part and even took action against having his songs played on the radio because he did not "want people to think the world has really changed until it has."[44] Another journalist remarked that the strength of the group Kino was in its pure simplicity because this kind of direct perception has the power to astonish.[45]

This keen perception of the reality of the times is expressed in many of Tsoi's lyrics. His songs capture the boredom felt by Soviet teens but also they go beyond this teen ennui to bold and simple discernment of significant social themes. The song "Mama, my vse tyazhelo bol'ny / Mama, We're All Really sick" is one example:

Zerna upali v zemlyu
Zerna prosyat dozhdya
Im nuzhen dozhd'
Razrezh' moyu grud', posmotri mne vnutr'
Ty uvidish' - tam vse gorit ognem
Cherez den' budet pozdno
Cherez chas budet pozdno
Cherez mig budet uzhe ne vstat'
Esli k dveryam ne podkhodyat klyuchi
Vyshibi dveri plechom.

Mama, my vse tyazhelo bol'ny
Mama, ya znayu, my vse soshli s uma

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[44] Easton, 76.

[45] Nikolaj Mejnert, "Tri vzglyada na 'Kino'," in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 85.

Stal' mezhdu pal'tsev
Szhatyj kulak
Udar vyshe kisti terzayushchij plot'
No vmesto krovi v zhilakh zastyl yad
Medlennyj yad
Razrushennyj mir
Razbitye lby
Razlomannyj nadvoe khleb
I vot kto-to plachet a kto-to molchit
A kto-to tak rad
Kto-to tak rad...

Mama, my vse tyazhelo bol'ny
Mama, ya znayu, my vse soshli s uma

Ty dolzhen byt' sil'nym
ty dolzhen umet' skazat':
'Ruki proch', proch' ot menya!'
Ty dolzhen byt' silnym
inache zachem tebe byt'?
Chto buduet stoit' tysyachi slov
Kogda vazhna budet krepost' ruki
I vot ty stoish' na beregu
i dumaesh' - plyt' ili ne plyt'

Mama, my vse tyazhelo boln'ny
Mama, ya znayu, my vse soshli s uma[46]

The seeds have fallen to the ground
The seeds they beg for rain
They need the rain
Cut my chest open and look inside me
You'll see that it's all on fire
After a day it'll be too late
After an hour it'll be too late
After a minute you won't be able to get up,
If the door doesn't fit the key
Knock it down with your shoulder.

Mama, we're all really sick,
Mama, I know that we've all gone crazy...

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[46] Viktor Tsoi, "Mama, my vse tyazhelo bol'ny," *Gruppa krovi*, performed by Kino, recorded 1986-1988, Aleksej Vishnya (producer), re-mastered at Studio MMC, (Russia: Moroz Records, 1998) CD; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 325-326.

Steel between fingers
Clenched fist
Hands strike from above tearing into flesh,
But instead of blood in our veins is poison
Slow poison
Peace is destroyed
Heads broken
Bread has been sliced in half,
And someone is crying, someone is silent
But someone is glad
Someone so glad...

Mama, we're all really sick
Mama, I know that we've all gone crazy

You have to be strong
You gotta be able to say:
'Hands off! Get away from me!'
You have to be strong
Or else why should you even be?
What will a thousand words mean
When a strong hand is important?
And here you stand on the shore
And decide - to swim or not to swim.

Strong impact is made on the listener's ear as Tsoi franticly sings his lyrics, adding dimension to his view that "my vse tyazhelo bol'ny / we're all really sick." The performance places value and meaning on the words. Meaning is shaped by the energy of the beat, the speed of the sound, and the pauses between words or phrases. The lyrics, already menacing on paper, placed in such a musical context become a verbal attack on the supposed openness that the era of Glasnost promised. Instead of relating that things are changing and getting better as promised, he utters that change cannot take place yet as Soviet society is weak and sick. There is no rain, only fire, no blood, only poison, no peace, only disparity, and no strength, only the weakness of paralyzing indecision. These words strike the listener:

Ty dolzhen byt' silnym
inache zachem tebe byt'?
Chto buduet stoit' tysyachi slov
Kogda vazhna budet krepost' ruki

You have to be strong
Or else why should you even be?
What will a thousand words mean
When a strong hand is important?

Without strength and real action there is no reason to exist. Could the reference to the uselessness of "thousands of words" be a jab at Gorbachev? Tsoi is clearly frustrated by the lack of direction. This is like Gleb's accusation towards Chairman Badin that real action had yet to occur:

> 'You're so busy about little questions, Comrade Chairman, that you lose sight of the big ones. You're running after fleas with a sledge hammer! Let's get to the root of the matter. The Red Army's covered thousands of miles and smashed the Entente, while your little crowd has only been breeding sluggards.'[47]

While Gleb is able to see that Badin, his leader, is missing the larger picture, Tsoi is able to see that his leader Gorbachev is focusing too much on the abstract.[48] In both cases the heroes are aware that real change requires action.

The strong hand also may indicate that Tsoi's society is used to being servile, its people cannot take up personal responsibility – as the chorus states they are "all

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[47] Gladkov, 97-98.

[48] There are many critiques of the leadership of Gorbachev that would concur with Tsoi's lyrics. For example, Mikhail Nenashev writes that Gorbachev said what people wanted to hear but he failed to act on it: "The Soviet audience found this political theatre with its single actor less and less convincing . . . [eventually] people not only refused to listen, but he [Gorbachev] deeply annoyed them." In Mikhail Nenashev, *An Ideal Betrayed: Testimonies of a Prominent and Loyal Member of the Soviet Establishment* (London: Open Gate Press, 1995) , 142. Many sources indicate that Gorbachev had ideas but he was too traditionally minded to act on them and unable to make an action plan: Nenashev, 136-137; Stephen White, *Gorbachev in Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) , 218; and Vladimir Yegorov, *Out of a Dead End into the Unknown*, David Floyd, trans. (Chicago: Edition q, 1993) , 122.

really sick." Under Glasnost, they had the opportunity for expression yet people were unsure of how to apply such freedom and the lack of clear guidelines led people to speculate on its possible limitations. Tsoi description of a diseased society is similar to Lermontov's attack on his own society – a generation that withers before it blooms:

> My, deti severa, kak zdeshnie rasten'ya,
> Tsvetem nedolgo, bistro uvyadaem...
> Kak solntse zimnee na serom neboskione,
> Tak pasmurna zhizn' nasha. Tak nedolgo
> Ee odnoobraznoe techen'e...
> I dushno kazhetsya na rodine, [49]
>
> *We, children of the north, like native blossoms,*
> *Burst into bloom, to wilt and wither quickly...*
> *So like the winter sun against a gray horizon*
> *Is our lack luster life! Is tedious progress*
> *Is equally monotonous and gloomy...*
> *We seem to stifle in our Motherland*[50]

There must be action and perhaps the real action is making a personal choice to do something – "to swim or not to swim." It is the decision to go with or against the crowd; to serve blindly or to resist.

One of the key concerns at the time of the album *Gruppa krovi* was the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. *Gruppa krovi* was written sometime around 1986 and can be best understood in the context of that time. From 1979 to 1989, Soviet troops participated in attempts to control and support a Marxist form of government in Afghanistan with devastating results. Ordinary people reacted strongly in private to the loss of life as the struggle continued and the strength of the Soviet state was challenged by the inability to control Afghanistan. In reviewing newspapers of that

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[49] Mikhail Lermontov, "Monolog," in Liberman, 34.

[50] Mikhail Lermontov, "A Monologue," in Ibid, 35.

time, it is clear that the Afghan struggle, the returning Soviet soldiers, and the mortalities were huge concerns for youth. While the state had the authority to control most of this public criticism, Tsoi's songs jumped this authoritative line taking the private criticism into the public realm. Like Gleb, Tsoi is a hero able to perceive and critique reality and who is unafraid of confrontation. Like Lermontov, Tsoi puts the personal cause above public obligation. The first song, also entitled "Gruppa krovi / Blood Group", comments on this highly prioritized social topic:

Teployo mesto no ulitsy zhdut otpechatkov nashikh nog
Zvezdnaya pyl' na sapogakh.
Myagkoyo kreslo kletchatyj pled ne nazhatyj vovremya kurok
Solnechnyj den' v oslepitel'nykh snakh

Gruppa krovi na rukave
Moj porjyadkobyj nomer na rykave
Pozhelaj mne udachi v boyu
Pozhelaj mne
Ne ostat'sya v etoj trave
Ne ostat'sya v etoj trave
Pozhelaj mne udachi

Mne est' chem platit' no ya ne khochu pobedy lyuboj tsenoj
Ya nikomu ne khochu stavit' nogu na grud'
Ya khotel by ostat'sya s toboj
Prosto ostat'sya s toboj
No vysokaya v nebe zvezda zovyot menya v put'

Gruppa krovi na rukave
Moj porjyadkobyj nomer na rykave
Pozhelaj mne udachi v boyu
Pozhelaj mne
Ne ostat'sya v etoj trave
Ne ostat'sya v etoj trave
Pozhelaj mne udachi [51]

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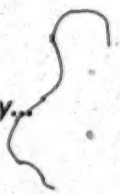
[51] Viktor Tsoi, "Gruppa krovi," *Gruppa krovi* ; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 323.

It's warm here but there on the street where our footprints are awaited
Star dust on our boots sparkles and shines
There's a cozy armchair with a checkered blanket, the trigger hasn't been pulled in time
Sunny days in dazzling dreams.

My blood type is marked on my sleeve,
My ordinal number is marked on my sleeve,
Wish me luck in the fight,
Wish for me
Not to remain in this grass,
Not to remain in this grass.
Wish me luck.

I can pay, but I don't want a victory at any cost.
I don't want to put my foot on someone's chest.
I would rather stay here with you,
Just to stay here with you.
But the star high in the sky is calling me on my way...



My blood type is marked on my sleeve,
My ordinal number is marked on my sleeve,
Wish me luck in the fight,
Wish for me
Not to remain in this grass,
Not to remain in this grass.
Wish me luck.

The song marches with a strong tempo, with an audio effect that sounds like flying jets. Here the soldier is a source of blood, and an unwilling participant controlled by the "star high in the sky" (Kremlin). The song uses contradictory language to great effect. The listener hears that there is "star dust sparkling on our boots" and at the same time that the "star high in the sky" provides the direction. The stardust may be in reference to a crumbling state – lack of ability to control, while the star contradicts this saying the state still holds power. The song reveals a disbelief in the likelihood for or the necessity of victory, yet the soldier still asks for luck in the fight. It is a song reflecting both the private and the authority's wishes. Although the soldier is compelled to continue in the path of war, the song allows the

soldier to realize that he has power; he can recognize his own wishes and act out on this separate identity from the state.

Anti-military views were already strong. Events like the accidental shooting down of the KAL airliner in 1983 and the landing of Mathias Rust's plane in the Red Square in 1987 revealed a crumbling of military order and discipline.[52] People associated the military with bullying, "ethnic bonding," poor living conditions, drug abuse and crime.[53] The conflict in Afghanistan further "fueled negative attitudes towards military service" and revealed that youth no longer felt connected to the state; there was a conflict between individualist and collectivist values.[54] Parents became upset

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[52] Wilson and Bachkatov, 68-69.

[53] Natalie Gross, "Youth and the Army in the USSR in the 1980s," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (July, 1990) : 481-482.

[54] Ibid, 485; The Soviet academician and human rights activist Andrei Sakharov (21 May 1921-14 December 1989) was very outspoken in his condemnation of the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan since 1980. He was exiled for seven years because of his call for withdrawal of Soviet troops, but he managed to continue his denunciations abroad through a network of family and friends. Due to external pressures and Gorbachev's desire to show reform, Sakharov was granted a return to Moscow on 16 December 1986. In the spring of 1989, he won a seat in the Congress of People's Deputies and used this public platform to continue his outcry against the Soviet occupation. The masses of people that congregated at his funeral were evidence that he was considered a highly influential person and hero. See Joshua Rubenstein and Alexander Gribanov, *The KGB File of Andrei Sakharov* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2005), 36-37, 65-66, 241-242, 260-261, 320.
It seems likely that Viktor Tsoi would have been familiar with Sakharov's declarations of truth and calls for action. However, Tsoi declared he was not a political person (Gasparyan, 239). He wrote only what he felt, stating he was not swayed by the topic of the day.(Tsoi, 6 May 1989, interview, *Molodoj leninist*, (Volgograd), in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 206). Yet his personal commitment to the peace theme shows that the issue was significant and popular even down to the lower cultural forms. His message is one of anti-war, like Sakharov's, yet the form is simple, in the language of youth and easy to disseminate.

because young conscripts were primarily used in Afghanistan, and these deaths united parent groups in refusing to let their sons be drafted.[55]

Tsoi's wife Marina accounts that Tsoi also avoided the military draft, first by technical school enrollment and later, at the age of twenty-one, by convincing the doctors that he was insane. His primary reason was that he did not want to leave rock and roll. For over six weeks Tsoi was submitted to doctors who performed mental and physical exams at an asylum. After his release he was clearly physically ill yet he immediately started to rehearse his music.[56]

What is perhaps most interesting about "Gruppa krovi" is Tsoi's treatment of the heroic image of the soldier. Traditionally the hero was connected to ideals of gods and power. Eventually the human soldier became the hero – but this would be a great commander or monarch, rather than a common foot soldier. Lermontov's poem "Borodino" was the first Russian poem to use a common soldier, rather than a great leader, as a central hero.[57] Gladkov's Gleb, a regular civil war hero, is similar. Their ordinariness challenges the heroic type but they still display characteristics of power and faith in sacrifice. Tsoi confronts the image further by reducing the soldier hero to an ordinary man doing his duty without much faith in sacrifice, and with a fear of death and face-to-face combat. This treatment strips the symbol of the ideal heroic characteristics of power and strength. In contrast, both Gladkov and Lermontov respect the traditional hero and the ideals of death in battle.

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[55] Andrew Wilson and Nina Bachkatov, 72.

[56] M. Tsoi, "Tochka otschyota," 13.

[57] Anatoly Liberman, "Commentary on 'Borodino,'" in Liberman, 503.

Video footage from a 1988 concert at Lushniki Stadium in Moscow reveals the impact of this song's performance on the audience.[58] We know that the context of performance was extremely important to Tsoi as he said, in a recorded interview, that concerts were often the only real way for a song to reach the public and to demonstrate the context of the piece – he even claimed that sometimes writing and performing were indivisible (*nerazrenie*) acts.[59] In the footage, young soldiers are amongst the crowd, some as audience members and some as patrol to keep the concert in check. "Gruppa krovi" is the first song Tsoi performs and clearly it has impact. The soldiers listen attentively and wave their hats - perhaps a salute to their hero. Tsoi has captured the personal aspect of the ordinary soldier. It seems many youth, even soldiers, yearned for reality not ideals of saintly sacrifice. Tsoi reflects the feelings of many youth who were tired of war heroes and could not continue to value sacrifice.[60] Yet Tsoi's understanding of war does not stop here.

The third song, "Vojna / War," on the album helps to clarify why Tsoi is against war:

> Pokazhi mne lyudej uverennykh v zavtrashem dne
> Narisuj mne portrety pogibshikh na etom puti
> Pokazhi mne togo kto vyzhil odin iz polka
> No kto-to dolzhen stat' dver'yu
> A kto-to zamkom a kto-to klyuchom ot zamka

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[58] "Kontsert pamyati Aleksandra Bashlacheva, Moskva, Luzhniki, 1988," in *Viktor Tsoi: Kinoprobi posviashchenie* (Moscow:Real Records and Tsoi/Moroz Records, 2001) DVD.

[59] Klip 11 "Siedi za soboj bezdel'nik", in *Chelovek v chyornom* (Moscow: Sozdannuyu tvorcheskoj gruppoj "A-TATA",1990-91) CD-Rom.

[60] Easton, 58.

Zemlya
Nebo
Mezhdy zemlej i nebom vojna
I gde by ty ne byl
Chto by ty ne delal
Mezhdy zemlej i nebom vojna

Gde-to est' lyudi dlya kotorykh est' den' i est' noch'
Gde-to est' lyudi u kotorykh est' syn i est' doch'
Gde-to est' lyudi dlya kotorykh teorema verna
No kto-to stanet stenoj
A kto-to plechom pod kotorym drognet stena.

Zemlya
Nebo
Mezhdy zemlej i nebom vojna
I gde by ty ne byl
Chto by ty ne delal
Mezhdy zemlej i nebom vojna[61]

Show me the people who are sure that tomorrow will be
Paint me the portraits of people who have died that way
Show me the one, who was left on the shelf
But someone will become the door,
Someone the lock, and someone the key for that lock.

The earth
The sky
Between them is war
Wherever you've been
Whatever you've done
Between them there will always be war.

Somewhere there are people for whom there's day, while
some have night.
Somewhere there are people who have a son and a daughter.
Somewhere there are people for whom the theory is true
But someone will be a wall,
And someone the shoulder, under which the door trembles.

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[61] Viktor Tsoi, "Vojna," *Gruppa krovi* ; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 324.

The earth
The sky
Between them is war
Wherever you've been
Whatever you've done
Between them there will always be war.

The song is characterized by a percussive quality similar to Pink Floyd's "Another Brick in the Wall." Contempt for this march of life and death that consumes everyone in its path is expressed. Tsoi speaks of the eternal existence of war. Effort is futile because there will always be those who build and those who tear down. Gleb's struggle to build the factory amongst rebels is easily envisioned with the soundtrack of this song. Just as they build a ropeway, it instantaneously comes under attack. Yet so much of what Tsoi sings contains hope for the future that it is difficult to believe that he is condemning his audience to a cycle of construction and destruction. Like Gleb, Tsoi challenges his audience "to build;" they are invited to have hope. This interpretation is plausible because there is a small video clip in which Tsoi tells his interviewer in broken English: "In the future? At first I wish that in the future there will be no problem, no wars, and of course I'm going to make music again . . .this kind of music which I make, I know it needs in the future."[62] He believes his music is necessary to develop hope. This quote expresses a hope for the future that is not so bleak as "Vojna / War," suggests. It also expresses that Tsoi feels that music is a part of that hope and is necessary to make a brighter world. Sound and music help the hero confront life and are a source of motivation. This brings us to the second part of the plot line: the mobilization of the people and confrontation of problems.

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[62] Klip 7 "Zvezda po imeni Solntse," in *Chelovek v chyornom* (Moscow: Sozdannuyu tvorcheskoj gruppoj "A-TATA",1990-91) CD-Rom.

In *Cement*, Gleb starts with his neighbors and goes through the necessary bureaucratic offices to sound out his feelings and get support for his goal: getting the factory in working condition in order to better the village life. He volunteers himself as much as possible and barges in to offices when the superiors refuse to listen. He is simple and independent. He confronts the authority yet waits for no response, seemingly ignoring them if necessary. While meeting Badin "Gleb did not wait to hear the answer, he went through the sun rays to the door."[63] Gleb is man of action who believes in the power of real work and he calls the people to action: "Comrades, don't let us play around with words . . .. We are cement Comrades: the working class. Let us keep that in mind. We've played the fool long enough; now we've got to start the real work!"[64]

In an article about Tsoi, a journalist asks herself what sets Tsoi apart from other contemporary rock heroes. She comes to the conclusion that Tsoi does not propose miracles; rather he simply believes in action.[65] This belief in the worthiness of action is a central trait of the Soviet hero. Perhaps, however, the Soviet hero often takes the more extreme route believing that, as Gleb says: "Heroism means doing the impossible."[66] Is the hero more about making the impossible happen? Tsoi's lyrics and image do not suggest the miraculous; instead he calls upon his audience to make its own choices for the future. They can be the ones to make their

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[63] Gladkov, 102.

[64] Ibid, 64-65.

[65] Nina Tikhonova, "Don Kikhot iz kotel'noj," in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 225.

[66] Gladkov, 55.

own miracles. This message is particularly strong in the chorus of "V nashikh glasakh / In Our Eyes:"

Postoj! Ne ukhodi!
My zhdali leta – prishla zima
My zakhodili v doma no v domakh shyol sneg
My zhdali zavtrashnij den'
Kazhdyj den' zhdali zavtrashnij den'
My pryachem glaza za shtorami vek

V nashikh glasakh kriki "Vperyod!"
V nashikh glasakh okriki "Stoj!"
V nasjikh glasakh pozhdenie dnya
I smert' ognya
V nashikh glasakh zvezdnaya noch'
V nashikh glasakh poteryannyj raj
V nashikh glasakh zakrytaya dver'
Chto tebe nuzhno? Vybiraj!

My khoteli pit' - ne bylo vody
My khoteli sveta - ne bylo zvezdy
My vykhodili pod dozhd' i pili vodu iz luzh
My khoteli pesen - ne bylo slov
My khoteli spat' - ne bylo snov
My nosili traur - orkestr igral tush

V nashikh glasakh kriki "Vperyod!"
V nashikh glasakh okriki "Stoj!"
V nasjikh glasakh pozhdenie dnya
I smert' ognya
V nashikh glasakh zvezdnaya noch'
V nashikh glasakh poteryannyj raj
V nashikh glasakh zakrytaya dver'
Chto tebe nuzhno? Vybiraj![67]

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[67] Viktor Tsoi, "V nashikh glasakh," *Gruppa krovi* ; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 327.

Hang on! Don't go!
We've been waiting for summer - winter came
We went into a house but it was snowing in there
We've been waiting for tomorrow
Every day we wait for tomorrow
We hide our eyes behind the drapery of the century.

In our eyes is the cry to "Go ahead!"
In our eyes is the cry to "Halt!"
In our eyes is the birth of a new day
And the death by fire
In our eyes is a starry night
In our eyes is a lost paradise
In our eyes is a closed door
What do you need? Choose!

We were thirsty - but there was no water
We wanted some light - but there were no stars
We walked out into the rain and drank water from puddles
We wanted songs - but there were no words
We wanted sleep - but there were no dreams
We were mournful - the orchestra played in celebration.

In our eyes is the cry to "Go ahead!"
In our eyes is the cry to "Halt!"
In our eyes is the birth of a new day
And the death by fire
In our eyes is a starry night
In our eyes is a lost paradise
In our eyes is a closed door
What do you need? Choose!

This is the tenth song on the album *Gruppa Krovi*. However, prior to this album Tsoi already clearly issues a call for action. In his first recording as Kino, the album *45*, recorded in 1982, there is an interesting song called "Alyuminievye ogurtsy /

Aluminum Cucumbers," discussed above.[68] A central thought is expressed in this section of its lyrics:

Tri chukotskykh mudretsa
Tverdyat tverdyat mne bez kontsa:
"Metall ne prineset ploda
Igra ne stoit svech
A rezul'tat – truda"
No ya sazhayu alyuminievye ogurtsy
Na brezentovom pole
Ya sazhayu alyuminievye ogurtsy
Na brezentovom pole [69]

Three clever men from Chukhotka
Prove to me again and again:
"Metal can not bring me fruit
It's not worth the trouble
And the result's more work."
But I'm planting aluminum cucumbers
On a field of canvas.
I'm planting aluminum cucumbers
On a field of canvas.

This song laughs at the old Soviet labour calls to action and calls for meaningful deeds. Like Gleb, Tsoi disrupts ordinary life and calls for something new. However, unlike Gleb, he mocks the focus on collective feats. The writer Gladkov was at the beginning of the Soviet period when there was a multitude of tasks to be done in order to set up a new society. However, by Tsoi's time these Soviet calls to action have become meaningless and routine, the new society is something to be challenged as it has become mediocre, sick, and valueless to the young generation. Just as Lermontov focuses on individual freedom, Tsoi also sings for personal choice.

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[68] See Chapter One, 37-40.

[69] Viktor Tsoi, "Alyuminievye ogurtsy," *45*, performed by Kino, recorded 1982, Andrey Tropillo (Producer), re-mastered at Studio SBI, (Moscow: Moroz Records, 1998) CD ; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 293.

One of Gleb's first actions is to bring equality to the village by aiding the redistribution of housing and wealth. He crusades the streets calling out to all to join him and give up their wealth: "Now then, Citizens, take your things. . . . Get ready to march to your new shelters."[70] When Tsoi sings the second song of the album, "Zakroj za mnoj dver' / Close the Door" it is reminiscent of Gleb's call to give up possessions. Tsoi calls his audience to join him in the rain and acknowledges that it is difficult for those to follow who are too comfortable:

Oni govovyat im nel'zya riskovat'
Potomu chto u nikh est' dom
V dome gorit svet
I ya ne znayu tochno kto iz nas prav
Menya zhdyot na ulitse dozhd'
Ikh zdyot doma obed.

Zakroj za mnoj dver'
Ya ukhozhu

I esli tebe vdrug haskuchit tvoj laskovyj svet
Tebe najdyotssya mesto u nas
Dozhdya khvatit na vsekh
Posmotri na chasy
Posmotri na portret na stene
Prislushajsya tam za oknom
Ty uslyshish' nash smekh

Zakroj za mnoj dver'
Ya ukhozhu[71]

They say that they can't afford any risk
Because they have a home
And in it there is light,
I don't know exactly which one of us is right
The rain's waiting for me outside
Dinner is waiting for them at home.

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[70] Gladkov, 185.

[71] Viktor Tsoi, "Zakroj za mnoj dver'," *Gruppa krovi* ; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 324.

Close the door behind me,
I'm leaving now.

If you're suddenly bored with your beautiful life
You can find a place with us
Everyone can have some rain
Look at the clock
Look at the picture on the wall
Take notice of there outside the window
You'll hear our laughter.

Close the door behind me,
I'm leaving now.

The song begins with simple guitar and during each verse the bass takes precedence. This musical arrangement gives each verse a sense of urgent alarm, pulsating through the deep tones of the bass. Tsoi despises those who are afraid of risk, those who cannot give up comfort in order for the happiness of future. In this song Tsoi is very close to the ascetic ideal: he is willing to remove himself from the world, to leave material wealth, and to live on the fringe because he believes in a higher happiness. In a 1989 interview, Viktor Tsoi stated that material wealth was not something he desired and that it only brings unpleasantness.[72] It is significant that over half the song is instrumental. He sings the chorus the second time and a lavish piano solo takes over. The flourishes of the keyboard are like that of a professional classical performer impressing the audience with his virtuosity before he exits the stage. Tsoi sings the chorus once more and a lesser instrumental picks off where he ends, playing on for over a minute. The simple utterance of "Close the door I'm leaving" becomes an invitation to join him because the music provides a

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[72] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Sovetskaya molodezh',* Riga, 6 May 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 205.

space for the listener to decide. The music indicates he is waiting for people to join him.

This kind of invitation to leave stagnating comfort is portrayed in the sixth song, "Boshetunmaj / Boshetunmaj":[73]

Tot kto v nyatnadtsat' let ubezhal iz doma
Vryad li pojmet togo kto uchilsya v spetsshkole
Tot u kogo est' khoroshij zhiznennyj plan
Vryad li budet dumat' o chyom-to drugom

My p'yom chaj v starykh kvartirakh
Zhdyom leta v starykh kvartirakh
V starykh kvartirakh gde est' svet
Gaz telefon gorachaya voda radiotochka
Pol-parket sanuzel razdel'nyj
Dom kirpichnyj odna sem'ya
Dve sem'i tri sem'i
Mnogo posobnykh pomeshchenij
Pervyj i poslednij ne predlagat'
Ryadom s metro tsentr

Vse govoryat chto my vmeste
Vse govoryat, no nemnogie znayut - v kakom
A iz nashikh trub idyot neobychnyj dym
Stoj! Opasnaya zona! Rabota mozga!
Boshetunmaj[74]

He who left his home at fifteen
Will hardly understand a private high school student
He who's got a good life plan
Will hardly be thinking about anything else

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[73] The word *boshetunmaj* is a created word that Tsoi admits has several variants. He says the word is "simply a great word." (Perhaps he liked the sound because he does not expand on the meaning or why the word is great). See Alexander Zhitinskij, *Puteshestvie rok-diletanta: muzykal'nyi roman* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1990) , 343.

[74] Viktor Tsoi, "Boshetunmaj," *Gruppa krovi* ; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 326.

We drink our tea in old apartments
We wait for the summer in old apartments,
In old apartments where there is electricity,
Gas, telephone, hot water, radio,
Parquet, partitioned bathroom,
Brick building, one family,
Two families, three families,
Much subsidiary assistance
No ground or top floor proposals
Close to the metro, center.

Everybody says that we are together
Everybody says but very few know in what place
And an unusual smoke creeps out of our chimneys
Halt! Danger! Brainwork!

Mmm, Boshetunmai!

A reggae beat sets the mood. The listener is in danger of becoming comfortable like the people in Tsoi's song who are sitting, drinking, perhaps smoking[75] and pretending that there really is genuine togetherness. There they are surrounded by a false sense of security: "Vse govoryat, chto my vmeste. Vse govoryat, no nemnogie znayut, v kakom. / Everybody says we're together. Everybody says but very few know in what place." This song confronts the problem of urban living and invites listeners to care actively for each other. Urban loneliness, especially in youth, was a huge problem. Large Soviet apartment blocks built on the outskirts of cities often were short of social facilities and lead to isolation.[76] Newspapers reflect this problem in printed letters from youth suffering from lack of community.[77] Perhaps this is why

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[75] The song alludes to "unusual smoke" and combined with the Reggae beat it appears this may be a reference to marijuana. However, there is no mention of Tsoi experimenting with drugs. Rather he appears to be anti-drug. In the film *Igla* his character fought against drug traffickers, and in real life Tsoi was described as someone who walked through life very carefully: M. Tsoi, 37.

[76] Andrew Wilson and Nina Bachkatov, 169.

[77] *Komsomolskaya pravda*, 7 May 1986 and 11 June 1986.

the song is in reggae style – a musical style that is rooted in calling for revolution or defiance. Tsoi is calling together a community: a community based on personal responsibility and initiative.

The last evidence of Tsoi's call to action to be discussed is the fourth song "Spokojnaya noch' / Goodnight:"

Kryshi domov drozhat pod tyazhest'yu dnej
Nebesnyj pastukh pasyot oblaka
Gorod strelyaet v noch' drob'yu ognej
No noch' sil'nej eyo vlast' velika

Tem kto lozhitsya spat'
Spokojnogo sna.
Spokojnaya noch'

Ya zhdal eto vremya i vot eto vremya prishlo
Te kto molchal perestali molchat'
Te komy nechego zhdat' sadyatsya v sedlo
Ikh ne dognat' uzhe ne dognat'

Tem kto lozhitsya spat'
Spokojnogo sna.
Spokojnaya noch'

Sosedi prikhodyat im slyshitsya stuk kopyt
Meshaet usnut' trevozhit ikh son
Te, komu nechego zhdat' otpravlyayutsya v put'
Te kto spasen
Te kto spasen

Tem kto lozhitsya spat'
Spokojnogo sna.
Spokojnaya noch' [78]

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[78] Viktor Tsoi, "Spokojnaya noch'," *Gruppa krovi* ; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 325.

Rooftops are shaking under the pressure of the day
A heavenly shepherd herds the clouds
A city shoots a patter of light into the night
But strong is the night, her power is great

To those who lie down to sleep
Sweet dreams
Good night

I've been waiting for this time and now this time has come
Those who were silent aren't silent anymore
Those who've got nothing to wait for, mount their horses
You won't catch up with them, already you can't.

To those who lie down to sleep
Sweet dreams
Good night

Neighbors come, they hear hooves clicking
That disturbs their sleep and alarms their dreams
Those who've got nothing to wait for they take off
Those who are save
Those who are saved.

To those who lie down to sleep
Sweet dreams
Good night

An ethereal tone is set through the use of synthesizers. The dull low timbre of Tsoi's voice floats through this texture in Sprechstimme style, barely qualifying as a melody. He is wishing people a good night - but how can anyone rest with such a menacing picture of nightfall?: "Kryshi domov drozhat / rooftops are shaking" and "stuk kopyt / hooves clicking." The second verse is a compelling call to act because the time has come! The message is clear that those who can truly welcome change are those with nothing to lose: "Te, komy nechego zhdat' sadyatsya v sedlo / Those who've got nothing to wait for, mount their horses." The reference to the epic warriors mounting their horses highlights the traditional heroic characteristics of

strength and power. The time is now and those who were silent have the power and will speak.

Official reaction to the performance of this song caught on film in1988, reveals that this was a powerful force that made the authorities leery. It is only the fourth song into the program but immediately after the song ends the sound cuts out, the lights go up and the announcer requests that the audience leaves as the performance is over. People are stunned and a few calls of resistance are heard. Tsoi tries to respond but his microphone has been turned off. Band members pace the stage and attempt to turn their equipment back on. After a few minutes of watching some of the crowd leave, and others standing in disappointment, the camera focuses on a soldier talking on a phone and this call results in the power to Tsoi's microphone briefly restored so that Tsoi can apologize for the short concert, but nothing more. He shrugs his shoulders and turns away - but the viewer can see that he is immensely frustrated.[79] What is not seen clearly on the footage is that a few spectators had overturned some chairs in excitement, perhaps in emotional response to the song.[80] According to Soviet law, the performer was responsible for the actions of his crowd and so fault was easily shifted from the group to the individual. "The time has come," Tsoi sang, however, there was still much to be done in order for the silent to be heard.

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[79] "Kontsert pamyati Aleksandra Bashlacheva, Moskva, Luzhniki, 1988," in *Viktor Tsoi: Kinoproby posviashchenie* (Moscow: Real Records and Tsoi/Moroz Records, 2001) DVD.

[80]Artur Gasparyan "On ne ishchyot slavy," *Moskovskij komsomolets,* 26 October 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 239.

The journey of becoming a hero is marked with the pitfalls of internal doubt and external struggles to be overcome. This is the third section of the basic heroic plot line. In this part of the story the hero must push through this and exhibit fervent hope and faith. Returning to the novel *Cement*, we read that Gleb makes a great effort through the majority of the novel to overcome the separation of his wife Dasha from him, and to deal with the loss of his home and finally the death of his daughter Nurka. In the end Gleb has overcome these personal losses. His neighbor, Motia, cries out how much he has lost but he responds by saying:

> 'Never mind, Motia, fire is not such a bad thing. . . . . We're fighting and building a new life. . . .'
> 'Oh ,Gleb, Gleb! You have destroyed your own home!'
> 'What then? We'll build a new one, Motia! If the old home has been destroyed, it means that the old home wasn't much good...'[81]

He has hope for the future and will not stop at any cost, even if this means he is alone.

The Soviet hero, like the ascetic ideal on which he is based, often finds himself alone. Like Gleb, much is sacrificed in pursuit of the greater cause or higher truth. Gladkov describes Gleb as being all alone.[82] The solitary hero with the burden of loss is found in Lermontov. As mentioned in Chapter One, Lermontov's heroes are often pushed to the outside of society by personal choice. In contrast to the ascetic they choose to pursue truth for their own individual good. Sacrifice is not made for the collective but only as a result of their rational resistance against the group. Pechorin, in Lermontov's *Hero of Our Time,* was rejected as a hero because he was

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[81] Gladkov, 293.

[82] Ibid, 293, 302.

too individualistic and real rather than the saintly ideal.[83] In Lermontov's poems the solitary hero appears over and over again. Like Tsoi, as explained in above, the poetic voice explains his position outside of society. It is his rational choice to pursue an internal creative life; it is not a sacrifice for the group. However, like the Soviet hero and the saint, he retains a spirit of faith.

This spirit of keeping faith is apparent in his song "Poprobuj spet' vmeste so mnoj / Try to Sing Together With Me:"

Na ulitsakh sneg utratil svoyu beliznu
V steklyannosti taloj vody my vidim lunu
My idyom
My sil'ny i bodry
Zamerzshie pal'tsy lomayut spichki
Ot kotorykh zazhgutsya kostry

Poprobuj spet' vmeste so mnoj
Vstavaj ryadom so mnoj

Eto nash den'
My uznali ego po raspolozheniyu zvyozd
Znaki ognya i vody
Vzglyady bogov
I vot my delaem shag .
Na nedostroennyj most
My poverili zvyozdam
I kazhdyj krichit: "Ya gotov!"

Poprobuj spet' vmeste so mnoj
Vstavaj ryadom so mnoj

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[83] Golstein, 2-3.

A te kto slab
Zhivut iz zapoya v zapoj
Krichat: "Nam ne dali pet'!"
Krichat: "Poprobuj tut spoj!"
My idyom
My sil'ny i bodry
Zamerzshie pal'tsy lomayut spichki
Ot kotorykh zazhgutsya kostry

Poprobuj spet' vmeste so mnoj
Vstavaj ryadom so mnoj[84]

Outside the snow already has lost its whiteness
We see the moon in melted water like glass
We go
We are strong and lively
Our freezing fingers break matches
Which will light the flames

Try to sing together with me
Stand up next to me

This is our day
We know it by the positions of stars
Omens of fire and water
Glimpses of gods
And we are making a step
Upon the unfinished bridge
We believe in the stars,
Every cry "I'm ready!"

Try to sing together with me
Stand up next to me

And those who are weak
Living from bottle to bottle
Cry out: "Not allowed to sing for us!"
Cry out: "Try to get somebody drunk here!"
But we go,
We go
We are strong and lively
Our freezing fingers break matches
Which will light the flames

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[84] Viktor Tsoi, "Poprobuj spet' vmeste so mnoj," *Gruppa krovi* ; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 327-328.

Try to sing together with me
Stand up next to me

Tsoi's voice is doubled – one voice singing high and the other an octave lower. The song's energy sparks a desire to trust that the future will be built – just as Gleb's heartfelt response that all his pain was worth the cost in order that a new home would be built. Those who join the hero can walk across "unfinished bridges" – they have faith. The words, "Ya gotov! / I'm ready!" are familiar as they are similar to the Komsomol motto: *Vsegda gotov*! (Always ready!). Tsoi has turned this phrase around to inspire his audience to push against the old Soviet traditions. They have been promised change and a new future and they intend to receive it. Tsoi invites his audience to believe and remove past doubts.

It is noteworthy that Tsoi asks his audience to join him in song. Like Lermontov he promotes the idea of artistic sensibility as a way to live and enjoy meaningful freedom. It is through song that true change and miracles can occur. It is the song that provides the motivation needed to live. The song provides the way to deal with and move past problems.

External factors are also to be overcome in a hero's journey. Unrelenting bureaucracy and leaders like Badin have already been mentioned as obstacles that the hero Gleb must move beyond. However, the climax of Gleb's journey is when the ropeway is attacked by mountain rebels and, in the skirmish, a worker pays the ultimate price – death.[85] Gleb has had to face his own people (the bureaucrats and his neighbors) and the unyielding Cossack rebels. Gleb confronts both.

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[85] Gladkov, 135-149.

Tsoi also faced these struggles. In an attempt to participate in the 1984 Soviet Rock Festival, Tsoi and his band Kino were not able to impress the entry judges, most likely, because 1984 was a year of stringent anti-rock legislation. In the spring of that year independent Soviet rock groups, and their culture of home made cassettes, were attacked and put on official black lists for being "ideologically harmful."[86] As Kino remained an underground group this could have been a cause for judges to be distrustful of the group. Tsoi was so upset with the rejection he did not speak for two days. Tsoi gathered support from two big names in the music community – Boris Grebenshchikov and Artemy Troitsky – and their efforts won Kino a place in the festival. However, Tsoi had to impress the audience and this was a big task considering his performance was on the third day of the festival, when people were already tired. His performance forced them to listen.[87] His entry was even named a winner of the festival!

However, there was also real physical danger in the anti-rock campaigns. In the early eighties the anti-rock campaign under the Ministry of Culture vigorously reviewed groups to be black listed and even suppressed groups by the use of police forces and jail terms.[88] At times the rules were loosely enforced but for many rock musicians the threat of abuse from militia and police and the possibility of jail time were very real. Kino, in particular, faced the possibility of detention, as they were

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[86] Troitsky, 98.

[87] M. Tsoi, "Tochka otschyota," 25-26.

[88] John Bushnell, *Moscow Graffiti: Language and Subculture* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990) , 76.

included in many of the black lists around that time (early eighties).[89] Tsoi was even arrested once in June of 1985, spending the night at the district administration of international affairs for performing at a house party.[90]

By 1985 the policies were relaxed but social aggression was still strong. Cultural personalities like Sergei Mikhalkov, writer of the Soviet anthem, compared rock to Aids in a literary journal, while Soviet scientists like Aleksej Aminev provided medical evidence to support this comparison to disease.[91] With this kind of reputation it followed that people distrusted those who marked their interest in rock music through personal style, and often, street aggression was a fact of life that the rocker had to face. Many Soviet citizens were afraid of their youth and treated those teenagers with suspicion if they were involved in alternative leisure like rock.[92] Even other youths were aggressive towards rock musicians and fans. In Moscow between 1986 and 1987, working class hoodlums called *Lyeberi* came into the city and beat up punks, metal fans, hippies and rockers. Hundreds of youths were involved in the fights – it was an urban war.[93] The song "Prokhozhij / You Better Keep Walking" reveals what it felt like to feel threatened for being a rocker:

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[89] Jim S. Riordan, "Soviet Youth: Pioneers of Change," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 40. No. 4 (October, 1988) : 563.

[90] M. Tsoi, "Tochka otschyota," 28-29.

[91] Timothy Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) , 230.

[92] Wilson and Bachkatov, 136.

[93] Ryback, 230.

Ya gulyayu po prospektu
Mne ne nado nichego
Ya nadel svoi ochki
I ne vizhu nikogo

Ej prokhozhij prokhodi
Ekh poka ne poluchil

Na kontserty ya khozhu bez bileta
Osen'yu, zimoj khozhu
Vesnoj i letom

Ej prokhozhij prokhodi
Ekh poka ne poluchil

Prikhozhu domoj ya noch'yu
Zavozhu magnitofon,
I sosed za stenkoj stonet
On uvidel srashnyj son

Ej prokhozhij prokhodi
Ekh poka ne poluchil [94]

I'm walking along the street
I don't need anything
I put on my shades
And I see nobody

Hey you! You better keep walking
Ya it's time or you'll get it!

I go to concerts for free
In the fall, in the winter I go
In the spring and in the summer

Hey you! You better keep walking
Ya it's time or you'll get it!!

I come home late at night
Switch on my stereo
And my neighbor groans,
He's having a nightmare

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[94] Viktor Tsoi,"Prokhozhij," *Gruppa krovi* ; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 328.

Hey you! You better keep walking
Ya it's time or you'll get it!

An angry sounding guitar begins this song but soon it mellows into a pleasant bright quality. Kino sings, "Oo" like children imitating ghosts. The song lyrics suggest that there is no reason to fear the rocker – he is just minding his own business. Tsoi's lyrics confront the social stereotype of the dangerous rocker with irony. The chorus is the voice of mistrust that people feel towards this sub-group. Tsoi is attempting to combat the false image of what rock is said to represent. The hero pushes against all obstacles. The real danger of Soviet rock music was not in an active fight for capitalist values, but that it allowed the individual to have an identity outside the collective.

Soon the hero gathers strength from the people – in the plot this may mean that he looks up to a mentor for strength and mentors others. However, the Soviet hero's strength is always centered on his belief in the people. At the beginning of the novel Gleb feels that the Russian people already have it all. They are a land and people of great potential:

> Without understanding why, Gleb felt wings unfolding in his soul. All this, the mountains, the sea, the factory, the town and the boundless distances beyond the horizon – the whole of Russia, we ourselves. All this immensity – the mountains, the factory, the distances – all were singing in their depths the song of our mighty labour. Do not our hands tremble at the thought of our back breaking task, a task for giants? Will not our hearts burst with the tide of our blood? This is the Workers' Russia; this is us; the new world of which mankind has dreamed throughout the centuries. This is the beginning: the first indrawn breath before the blow. It is. It will be. The thunder roars.[95]

This feeling of great possibility and faith in his land and people, is confirmed at the end of the story when Gleb asserts that everyone is a hero:

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[95] Gladkov, 34.

> Why speak, when everything was clear without words? He needed nothing . . . he had no words, no life – apart from this tumultuous mass . . .. it's not a matter of words, Comrades . . . not a wagging of tongues. . . . Keep your heads firm on your shoulders and get the work well in hand. That's how you have to look at it! It's no merit when we all struggle consciously at the construction of our proletarian economy -! All of us-! United and of one mind! If I am a hero, then you are all heroes, and if we don't work with all our guts towards that kind of heroism, then to hell with us all![96]

The above hero's statement reveals his humility, confirms his believe in action over words and gives the credit to the people. There is no need for well-spoken words because it is the people that matter.

This respect for the strength of the people is found in Tsoi's lyrics, especially in the *Gruppa krovi* album because here he is more socially direct.[97] Tsoi shouts "we" instead of "I," like the Soviet hero he does value the power of the people. In his song "Peremen / Change" he states "I bolshe net nichego vse nakhoditsya v nas / and we don't need anything more, we have it all." The journalist Shlyamovich focuses on these lines and asserts that Tsoi followed an endless road to comprehension of reality – a search that found everything right here – the Soviet Union.[98] Tsoi's inspiration and search for truth is connected to the Soviet people.

The song "Dal'she dejstvovat' budem my / We'll Take Action from Now On!" reveals that there is strength in "we" than in "I:"

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[96] Ibid, 310-311.

[97] Evgenij Dodolev, "Nachal'nik 'Kamchatki'," *Moskovskij Komsomolets*, 25 March 1988,
in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 216.

[98] Mikhail Shlyamovich, "Interesnoe 'Kino' Viktor Tsoya i ego povoroty," *Sovetskaya Estoniya*, 6 January 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 231.

My khotim videt' dal'she
Chem okna doma naprotiv
My khotim zhit'
My zhivuchi kak koshki
I vot my prishli zayavit' o svoikh pravakh
Slyshish' shelest plashchej?
Eto my
Dal'she dejstvovate budem my

My rodilis' v tesnykh kvartirakh
Novykh rajonov
My poteryali nevinnost' v boyakh za lyubov'
Nam uzhe stali tesny odezhdy
Sshitye vami dlya nas odezhdy
I vot my prishli skazat' vam o tom
Chto dal'she
Dal'she dejstvovate budem my[99]

We want to see further
Than the windows across the street
We want to live
To have nine lives like a cat
And here we are to claim our rights
Can you hear the rustle of our coats
Here we are
We'll take action from now on

We were born in crowded apartments
In new districts
We lost our virginity in the struggle for love
The clothes you made for us no longer fit us
We've grown out of them
And here we are to tell you that
From now on
We'll take action from now on!

Tsoi has come together with the group and together they face the choices of the future. By his strong example the hero often attracts those who wish to be mentored. In *Cement*, the crowds of workers surround Gleb to celebrate him – there is no one specific person cited as being a follower of Gleb. However the adulation

[99] Viktor Tsoi, "Dal'she dejstvovat' budem my," *Gruppa krovi ;* Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 328-329.

and respect he has won carries the promise that people are soon to follow in his footsteps.

By 1987 there were groups already imitating the sound and philosophy of Tsoi and Kino.[100] Tsoi was called the "true educator of the young generation" and if you "give them Tsoi – they have it all."[101] This is almost a reversal of Gleb and the Russian people: the group benefits from the individual, rather than the individual from the group. It is at this stage, the height of the hero's significance that transcendence takes place.

The hero rising above mere self characterizes this last transcendence stage; usually there is celebration of the completed task reached or in many cases the hero's death – the ultimate transcendence. The image of death is central. Russia has a long intellectual tradition of believing that death, with a special emphasis on sacrificial death, is necessary. Particularly after the Great Patriotic War, death was given great importance as a kind of rebirth into the collective, providing a "sense of history" and "national identity."[102] True rebirth into the group requires that the hero die.

Gleb's transcendence and rebirth takes the form of his losing everything except his life. He loses his family in every sense. However, Gladkov is sure to include a philosophy on death in his novel. There are two significant deaths in *Cement*: the first is the sacrificial death of a worker in the defense of the ropeway,

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[100] Aksentsev, 219.

[101] Mikhail Sadchikov,"Zvevdi po imena 'Kino'," *Antrakt,* N.1, 1990, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 242.

[102] Clark, 179 – 180.

and the second is a boatload of White Soldiers, taken as prisoners, who wish to be cleansed of their guilt through death. Gleb provides an oration to the sacrifice of the worker:

> 'Comrades, listen! A sacrifice to labour . . .. With our united strength . . .. No tears or sobs! The victory of our hands . . . the factory. We have won . . .. We shall make ourselves heard with fire and machinery. The great work of building up the Workers' Republic . . .. Ourselves, with our brains and bodies . . .. The blood and suffering of the struggle – These our weapons for winning the whole world. Let it go now, Brothers!'[103]

Gleb honors the worker and vows that the death will not be in vain. There is value in the honor of this death. This honor helps to promote the group's cause and ultimate goal.

The value of the White soldiers' deaths is the cleansing or purification. In this story many soldiers submit to death willingly, considering it a joy: "We have only our homeland; and nothing outside it. We are accursed, but in this accursedness is our expiation. Let our country even demand torture and death from us. We are ready; we submit. You will not refuse us this joy?"[104] A single prisoner seconds this request: "Let me justify my life. Even if I die I vindicate myself."[105] The above quotations stress that in order to live – to be redeemed and reborn - death is essential.

This view stresses the value of the future or past glories above the present.[106] Lermontov promoted the idea of sacrifice as part of past glory in the poem "Borodino." However, his poems often reacted against the idea of fate; instead

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[103] Gladkov, 149.

[104] Ibid, 220.

[105] Ibid, 221.

[106] Clark, 174.

they are concerned with ordinary man's fear of death, but they also focus primarily on the problems of the present, eased only by the balm of melody.

Tsoi's song "Legenda / The Legend" utilizes a drumbeat that invokes the sound of an eternal heartbeat. The beat is steady and the sound of ringing and echoes provide the illusion of being transported across time and perhaps even between life and death. Tsoi's drone-like voice is transfixing as he sings:

Sredi svyazok v gorle komom tesnitsya krik
No nastala pora i tyt uzh krichi ne krichi
Lish' potom kto-to dolgo ne smozhet zabyt'
Kak shatayas' bojtsy ob travu vytirali mechi

I kak khlopalo kryl'yami chernoe plemya voron
Kak smeyalos' nebo a potom prikusilo yazyk
I drozhala ruka u togo kto ostalsya zhiv
I vnezapno v vechnost' vdrug prevratilsya mig
I gorel pogrebal'nym kostrom zakat
I volkami smotreli zvezdy iz oblakov
Kak raskinuv ruki lezhali ushedshie v noch'
I kak spali vpovalki zhivye ne vidya snov

A zhizn tol'ko slovo
Est' lish' lyubov' i est' smert'
Ej a kto budet pet' esli vse budut spat'?
Smert' stoit togo chtoby zhit'
A lyubov' stoit togo chtoby zhdat'[107]

[107] Viktor Tsoi, "Legenda," *Gruppa krovi* ; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 329.

The outcry is stuck in my throat
But the time has come, and either you cry out or you don't
But then, someone won't be able to forget
How the warriors were cleaning their swords on the grass

And how the raven's black tribe were clapping their wings
How the sky was laughing, then bit its tongue
And how the hands of the one who survived were trembling
And how the moment suddenly became an eternity
The sunset burned like a funeral pyre,
And the stars were gazing like wolves from the clouds
At those who passed into the Night, lying with their arms abreast
And at those who survived, and were sleeping dreamlessly...

And "life" is just a word
There is only love and death
Who will be singing, if everyone will fall asleep?
Death is worth living,
And Love is worth waiting for...

It is reminiscent of the earliest notion of hero: the brave Slavic warriors of the pre-Christian era, the *bogatyr'i*. Through the song, listeners can join these epic warriors in their battle cry and see them wipe their blades on the grass. The field is full of the dying and Tsoi yearns for survivors to continue the song, "Ey! A kto budet pet', esli vse budut spat'? / Who will be singing, if everyone falls asleep?" The ideas of the glorious battle and the worthiness of death are central: "Smert' stoit togo, chtoby zhit' / Death is worth living." Yet the stress is on the ability of the hero to meet death with courage rather than death as sacrifice. In this sense the hero, does retain some of the traditional value in death; he exemplifies courage and becomes eternal or at least his song does. The heartbeat is the last to go, and the fade out gives the impression that this fight must never die – the hero must continue, the song must never end.

An article printed on 21 August 1990, six days after Tsoi's death, uses this exact phrase as its title: "Smert' stoit togo, chtoby zhit' / Death is worth living." [108] The article recounts the accidental road death of Tsoi and announces that Tsoi had just finished recording an album the day before the tragedy. This recording promotes the idea that Tsoi will live on through his songs. Shortly after his death, fans of Tsoi began creating a memorial on a wall on Arbat Street in Moscow.[109] Proclamations of love and devotion to Tsoi remain emblazoned in bold paint along with artistic renderings of the hero, and various offerings reverently placed at this pilgrimage sight. An article about the wall is given front-page status in the newspaper *Komsomolskaya pravda,* a year after Tsoi's death, and in it the fans are referred to as "pioneers". They are pilgrims come to pay homage to their hero. A comment from Tsoi's friend Igor Sukachev perhaps sums up the general feeling of these fans – "He is alive in our hearts."[110] Thus the hero truly is transcendent – he has died only to live on in the hearts of the collective. Artemy Triotsky confirmed this feeling just two days after Tsoi's death, " Tsoi remains with us – and these is not just words. / And already, now – he is a legend."[111] Yuri Domanskij, in his chapter on Tsoi, explains how Tsoi's death led to creation of heroic mythology.[112]

Both early Soviet literary heroic notions and late Soviet rock ideas of hero rely on the traditional hagiographic model. Although these two interpretations of

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[108] *Komsomolskaya pravda*, 21 August 1990.

[109] *Ibid*, 16 August 1991.

[110] Klip 12 "Stuk, peremen," in *Chelovek v chyornom* (Moscow: Sozdannuyu tvorcheskoj gruppoj "A-TATA",1990-91) CD-Rom.

[111] *Komsomolskaya pravda*, 17 August 1990.

[112] Domanskij, 24-44.

hero share the same origins, they diverge drastically with rock music's prioritization of the individual over the collective. This reveals the changing values at the end of the Soviet era.

Chapter 3

Defining the Last Hero

> Who was he really among us? He was like a little bard of the Petersburg bend, a rioter, an appalling philistine of tranquility, or was he perhaps a cosmic diplomat, raising up prophetic insight? The answer to this question may be found in his songs.[1]

The cult of Viktor Tsoi still retains its strong appeal for those who remember him and for those newly initiated to his songs and legacy. This enduring attraction begs the questions: What is it in Tsoi's worldview that draws the audience to form a notion of him as a hero? Does Viktor Tsoi represent a timeless heroic notion? How does the last hero become the first celebrity?

In Marshall's study of celebrity power, he states that the rise of the celebrity is a modern phenomenon that is relational to the rise of democracy and capitalism.[2] Timothy Ryback's judgment on Soviet rock is in agreement with Marshall's theory. He states that the government recognition of Soviet rock was proof of a democratic process.[3] The celebrity requires an audience and the formation of audience originates with the rise of the power of the crowd at the time of the French Revolution.[4] The celebrity can only be as valuable as the crowd or audience

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[1] Vyacheslav Ogaj, ed., *Koryo Saram: Rozhdennyi na styke sozvezdii – V. Tsoi* (St. Petersburg: Koryo Saram, 1992) , 1.

[2] P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) , 4.

[3] Timothy W. Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) , 233.

[4] Marshall, 28.

determines.[5] In turn, the celebrity or star helps to define and represent the crowd's power:

> The celebrity . . . allows for the configuration, positioning, and proliferation of certain discourses about the individual and individuality in contemporary culture. The celebrity offers a discursive focus for the discussion of realms that are considered outside the bounds of public debate in the most public fashion. The celebrity system is a way in which the sphere of the irrational, emotional, personal, and affective is contained and negotiated in contemporary culture.[6]

In Chapter One Viktor Tsoi's connection to the heroic narrative of the Russian romantic-realist poet Mikhail Lermontov was established. Similar to Lermontov, Tsoi confronts his world with truth and claims a place for the individual through creative resistance rather than violent rebellion. The Soviet era and its heroic tradition also leave their imprints on Tsoi's heroic image but the traditional value of the collective is diminished, and the present takes priority over past and future glories. This chapter seeks out the voices of the traditional bard, Russian patriotic rock and western punk philosophies in order to understand the place of Tsoi's music and image, and the empowerment of the audience, within some of the musical traditions of his time. While Tsoi's music has possible origins other than these musical sources, these three music traditions reveal that the meaning and social significance of Tsoi's music, image, and world view derive from a variety sources, both domestic and foreign.

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[5] Ibid, 19, 52, 66-67.

[6] Ibid, 72-73.

The songwriter's treatment of the notion of death is useful in determining his or her philosophy of life. Death provides clarity to the "sacred identity" of the hero.[7] The hero's physical death reveals what the audience valued as an ideal in his image. In Chapter Two, death was the crucial point of the hero's ultimate value.[8] Therefore, the hero's own treatment of the idea of death also has meaning, in that it discloses what the hero, or creator of the heroic image, believed to be important in life. In death, the hero proves his priority of either the collective or the individual, significance of past, present or future and thus becomes an example of a way to live and die.

Death often becomes the point of identification, a chance for the audience or group to join the hero. Simon Frith defines identity as a process and music as one way to experience that process of the "self in progress."[9] Music can be a vital part of the identity process because music supplies a "sense of self and others;"[10] music doesn't just represent values, it embodies and transmits them[11] – it is a social activity in which a person can seek and work towards an ideal represented by the hero.[12] P. David Marshall clarifies that the special function of the music celebrity is to represent a model of what is considered real or authentic by the group, and to

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[7] Thomas Cushman, *Notes From Underground: Rock Music Counterculture in Russia* (USA: State University of New York, 1995) , 149 .

[8] Chapter Two, 125-128.

[9] Simon Frith, "Music and Identity," in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, eds., *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage Publications, 1996) , 109.

[10] Ibid, 110.

[11] Ibid, 117-118.

[12] Ibid, 123.

legitimize a community and a culture – celebrity is dependent on audience reception.[13] This chapter will examine some of the possible ideals with which Tsoi's audience identified through an examination of the philosophy of death in three important music traditions and cultures that had an affect on Soviet rock: bard, patriotic rock, and punk. [14] Life philosophies are uncovered by examining how the lyrics depict death, and by analyzing how the audience may identify with them, and the role that the song plays in that process.

The bard tradition of the Soviet Union is a phenomenon that began during the Khrushchev era (1953 to 1964). During that time, poetry of all forms was very popular due to the de-Stalinization of intellectual life,[15] and bard music was extremely attractive as it was "painfully sincere and desperately optimistic."[16] Both officially recognized literature and *samizdat* literature began to reflect the population's loss of faith in absolute truth, as found in the epic style of seeing the world in terms of binary oppositions like good and evil; instead writers embraced

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[13] Marshall, 66-67, 198.

[14] Domanskij takes a more specialized approach to death and hero making. He examines how the type of physical death can determine how the audience interprets the hero's life and work. His priority is to show that the rock and romantic traditions are similar in the texts on death. He compares the death of Jim Morrison and Jimmy Hendrix to Viktor Tsoi. See Domanskij, 34-35.
In contrast, this Chapter aims to move past romantic literary connections and examine the philosophy of death in the music itself rather than interpretation of death and legends through the romantic model.

[15] Gerald Stanton Smith, *Songs to Seven Strings: Russian Guitar Poetry and Soviet 'Mass Song'* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984) , 1.

[16] Tanya Frisby, "Soviet Youth Culture," in Jim Riordan, ed., *Soviet Youth Culture* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1989) , 3.

complex truth and a "stream of consciousness" style.[17] This generation created strong examples of the public's dissenting voice, and some academics view this generation as responsible for the ideas that would later emerge during Glasnost. This dissenting voice may be interpreted as a crucial point in what Marshall calls "the rise of the crowd."[18] As mentioned in the introductory chapter, bard music was socially and politically engaged poetry sung by the poet and accompanied by guitar. Music was secondary to lyrics. Bards' songs provided a commentary on life, and often were subversive in nature. Therefore, most bards in the Soviet era were denied rights to record and poet-bards usually shared the music directly with their audience at small house gatherings or by means of *magnitizdat*.[19]

Vladimir Semenovich Vysotsky (25 January 1938- 25 July 1980) was perhaps the most significant Russian bard, and today is considered a cultural icon and artistic phenomenon. Vysotsky was born in Moscow in 1938 to a military officer and a translator who separated within his first year. He was brought up mainly by his mother in Moscow, except for a few years when he lived with his father, who at that time was serving with the post-war Soviet occupation in East Germany. As a young man, Vysotsky studied at a college of civil engineering but soon dropped that pursuit in favour of drama classes at the Moscow Art School. He graduated in 1960, and

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[17] Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*. 3rd ed., (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000) , 230-231.

[18] The *shestdesyatniki* (sixties generation) created strong examples of the public's dissenting voice, and some academics view them as responsible for the culturally progressive ideas that would later emerge under Glasnost. See: Cynthia Simmons, *Their Fathers' Voice: Vassily Aksyonov, Venedikt Erofeev, Eduard Limonov, and Sasha Sokolov* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993).

[19] *Magnitizdat* refers to the phenomenon of amateur recordings on tapes, copied and passed around through the underground.

eventually became part of the newly formed Taganka Theatre Company. The Taganka was an important part of the renewal of Soviet cultural life, and Vysotsky participated in this revitalization by creating memorable stage roles and interpretations of great plays like Hamlet.[20] In addition to theatre, Vysotsky played minor roles in film, radio and television. While he never attained recognition in life as a great actor, he did receive praise from the Soviet press regarding his acting and was considered a star by the public. Vysotsky the bard was often integrated into his stage image with the use of his songs as part of the dramatic interpretation at the Taganka theatre. He lived a hectic, intense lifestyle, was prone to alcoholic binging, and slept for only short periods, as many of his nights were occupied with creative writing and song.[21] In this way, Vysotsky found time to generate a bard repertoire consisting of over 700 songs. While never recording an official album, Vysotsky enjoyed great popularity and his songs were received as an "encyclopedia of soviet life."[22] He was known for his charisma, his deep gravelly voice, and his wild eagerness to embrace all that life had to offer. On 25 July 1980, Vysotsky died in his sleep. He died of cirrhosis (most likely brought on by his reckless lifestyle), and his

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[20] Stanton Smith, 147-149.

[21] S. V. Vysotskaya, "That's What My Son Was Like," interview, *Argumenty i fakty*, 1987, No. 3, in Yuri Andreyev, Iosif Boguslavsky (compilers), *Vladimir Vysotsky: Hamlet With a Guitar* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1990) , 240-241; Nina Maximovna Vysotskaya, "Kindness was His Main Character Trait," in Andreyev and Boguslavsky , 336-337.

[22] Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture Entertainment and Society since 1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992) , 158.

death sparked an almost instant national mourning in the streets of Moscow, despite the ongoing Olympic games held there at the time.[23]

Vladimir Vysotsky was already a respected theatre actor when he began writing guitar poems. What started as an interest in performance of various criminal and war songs, turned into the writing and singing of his own street themed songs. Vysotsky credited his emergence into this genre with his exposure to the music of Bulat Okhudzhava, the father of Soviet bard music.[24] Vysotsky's songs are above all distinguished by a kind of "street aesthetic" and, like many of the bards; he broke social taboos of his time.[25] His music represented the continuance of the Russian folk tradition of *blatnaia muzyka* (criminal music) and *chastushka* (village song) through a similar usage of " an affected pose of marginality and coarseness, both in life and music" that revealed truth about Soviet life.[26] Vysotsky defined the soul of his numerous songs with the following explanation:

> I write songs on various subjects. I have series, or rather cycles, of songs on the war theme, on sporting life, fairytale songs, lyrical songs. But there is in fact only one theme in my songs, the theme of life. There's just this one theme: we must live better; and the form might vary, from comedy to fairytale, to humour.[27]

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[23] Artemy Troitsky, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia* (Winchester, MA: Faber and Faber, 1987) , 63.

[24] Smith, 152 ; Bulat Okhudzhava is acknowledged as the first Soviet bard with the writing of his song " Neistror i upryam gori, ogon', gori..." in 1946. See "Andrei Gavrilov," in Alexander Zhitinskij, *Puteshestvie rok-diletanta: muzykal'nyi roman* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1990) , 200.

[25] Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 66-67.

[26] Cushman, 73-74.

[27] *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, 8 August 1986, as quoted in Andreyev and Boguslavsky, 22.

An introduction to a recent collection of his songs, states that the main word for this poet was, "Live!"[28] Indeed, Vysotsky was consumed by experiencing all that life could offer and he attempted to create a better life for his people. Memoirs and tributes written by friends and contemporaries of Vysotsky allude to his deep feeling of civic responsibility, and of an overwhelming fear that death would come too early for him to sing all he had wanted to say.[29] Shortly before his demise, Vysotsky said about his audience, "I need these people more than they need me."[30] When asked what he most desired to know, he replied, "How many years, months, weeks, days and hours of creative work I have left."[31] This remark clearly indicates that Vysotsky believed in a fated or predestined death, and faced the expected timing with apprehension.

The philosophies of Vysotsky and Tsoi make a likely comparison as both men were considered voices of an "entire generation."[32] The lives of Vysotsky and Tsoi embodied the same symbolic characteristic found in the meaning of both their family

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[28] V. I. Novikov, *Vladimir Vysotsky: Sochineniya v dvukh tomakh: Tom pervyj* (Ekaterinburg: U-Faktoriya, 2002) , 9.

[29] Yuri Andreyev, "Vladimir Vysotsky in His Lifetime and After His Death," in Andreyev and Boguslavsky, 19, 21, 22, 27; Vladimir Vysotsky, "Koni priveredlivye / Unruly Horses," in Ibid, 170 – 173. Vladimir Vysotsky, "On My Song Writing," in Ibid, 202-203; Vladimir Vysotsky, "My Parts in the Theatre," in Ibid, 212; N. M. Vysotskaya, "Kindness Was His Main Character Trait," in Ibid, 238; Vadim Tumanov, "Life Without Lying," in ibid, 309, 313-314; Alla Demidiva, "He Wrote The Way He Lived...", in Ibid, 328, 331-332.

[30] Vladimir Vysotsky as quoted in Tumanov, "Life Without Lying," in Ibid, 313.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Mikhail Shlyamovich, "Interesnoe 'Kino' Viktora Tsoya i ego povoroty," *Sovetskaya Estoniya*, 6 January 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 230.

names – "height."[33] Each man rose to this "height," and each became the phenomenon and star of his respective generation. Vysotsky is also considered by some as being Russia's "first real rocker," in spirit not form, because of his use of " the language of the street," and the way he influenced amateur song writing and the examination of internal freedom.[34] Viktor Tsoi is named as a successor of this bard spirit, and his music is sometimes called an example of "bard-rock."[35]

It is difficult to choose just one of Vysotsky's songs, but the song "Koni priveredlivye / Unruly Horses" is recognized as one of his masterpieces; in addition its theme, death, is the chosen focus of this chapter. The poet Andrei Voznesenky commented that this "passionate personal anthem" was:

> . . . a great song and great poetry, where the voice tosses the guitar away, wipes the cynical grin of everyday life from its lips . . . and gives itself up to the very highest spirit of poetry, the elemental force and truth of suffering – in it we hear not a chansonnier, but the destiny of a poet."[36]

As Voznesenky writes, this song is recognized as an exposition that intimately conveyed Vysotsky's own personal understanding of life and death. Friends and close acquaintances remarked that this song was a favorite because it was very much connected to the Vysotsky they knew.[37] This song is singled out as Vysotsky's

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[33] Vysotsky in Russian comes from the word for height: *vysota*. The Korean family name Tsoi in the original characters symbolizes height: "Chto oznachaet familiya 'Tsoj'," in Ogaj, 20-21.

[34] Andrei Gavrilov, in Zhitinskij, 202.

[35] Ibid, 203.

[36] Voznesenky, "Sud'ba poeta," as quoted in Smith, 177.

[37] Mikhail Ulyanov, "He lived as he sang...," in Andreyev and Boguslavsky, 324-325; Alla Demidova, "He Wrote the Way He Lived," in Ibid, 334.

discourse on life and death: a realization of his own destiny.[38] In "Koni priveredlivye / Unruly Horses", Vysotsky sings:

Vdol' obryva, po-nad propast'yu, po samomu po krayu
Ya konej svoikh nagajkoyu stegayu, pogonyayu...
Chto-to vozdukhu mne malo – veter p'yu, tuman glotayu, -
Chuyu s gibel'nym vostorgom: propadayu, propadayu!

Chut' pomedlennee, koni, chut' pomedlennee!
Vy tuguyu ne slushajte plet'!
No chto-to koni mne popalis' priveredlivye –
I dozhit' ne uspel, mne dopet' ne uspet'.

Ya konej napoyu,
ya kuplet dopoyu –
Khot' mgnoven'e eshchyo postoyu
na krayu...

Sginu ya – menya pushinkoj uragan smetyot s ladoni,
I v sanyakh menya galopom povlekut po snegu utrom, -
Vy na shag netoroplivyj perejdite, moi koni,
Khot' nemnogo, no prodlite put' k poslednemu priyutu!

Chut' pomedlennee, koni, chut' pomedlennee!
Ne ukazchiki vam knut i plet'.
No chto-to koni mne popalis' priveredlivye –
I dozhit' ne uspel, mne dopet' ne uspet'.

Ya konej napoyu,
ya kuplet dopoyu –
Khot' mgnoven'e eshchyo postoyu
na krayu...

My uspeli: v gosti k Bogu ne byvaet opozdannij, -
Chto zh tam angely poyut takimi zlymi golosami?!
Ili eto kolokol'chik ves' zashyolsya ot rydanij,
Ili ya krichu konyam, chtob ne nesli tak bistro sani?!

Chut' pomedlennee, koni, chut' pomedlennee!
Umolyayu vas vskach' ne letet'!
No chto-to koni mne popalis' priveredlivye...
Kol' dozhit' ne uspel, tak khotya by – dopet'!

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[38] V. I. Novikov, *Vladimir Vysotsky: Sochineniya v dvukh tomakh: Tom pervyj* (Ekaterinburg: U-Faktoriya, 2002) , 9.

Ya konej napoyu,
ya kuplet dopoyu –
Khot' mgnoven'e eshchyo postoyu
na krayu...[39]

Along the chasm's edge, upon the precipice's brink
I urge my horses onward, I coerce them, whiplash flying.
I'm somehow short of breath, I gulp the air, the wind I drink...
I'm gripped with mortal ecstasy: I'm dying, oh, I'm dying!

Slower, slower, oh my horses, slowly run, slowly run!
Pay no heed to the lash's taut thong.
The horses that fell to my lot are unruly ones...
I've not lived out my life, I can't finish my song.

I'll water my horses,
I'll sing some more verses –
Yet a moment I'll stand on the brink
ere I sink.

I'll perish: from its outstretched hand the frenzied wind will blow me,
At a gallop through the morning snow my sleigh's drawn helter-skelter.
Be patient, patient, wayward horses, make the journey slowly,
And delay if but a while before we reach the final shelter.

Slower, slower, oh my horses, slowly run, slowly run!
You don't serve the whip or the thong.
The horses that fell to my lot are unruly ones...
I've not lived out my life, I can't finish my song.

I'll water my horses,
I'll sing some more verses –
Yet a moment I'll stand on the brink
ere I sink.

It's all over: guests to God cannot delay until the morrow.
But why then should the angels' voices sound so harsh and hoarse?
Is it but the harness bell that jangles wildly out of sorrow,
Or do I harangue the horses to slow down their hectic course?

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[39] Vladimir Vysotsky, "Koni priveredlivye," in Andreyev and Boguslavsky, 170, 172; Vladimir Vysotsky, "Koni priveredlivye," *Zolotoj al'bom*, performed by Vladimir Vysotsky, written 1972, (Moscow: Russkij kompakt disk, 2002, CD).

Slower, slower, oh my horses, slowly run, slowly run!
I implore you, don't gallop headlong!
The horses that fell to my lot are unruly ones...
I've not lived out my life, yet I'd finish my song.

I'll water my horses,
I'll sing some more verses –
Yet a moment I'll stand on the brink
ere I sink.[40]

Vysotsky's voice attempts to restrain his emotion, yet by the third line of the first verse his vocal performance easily conjures up a man with beads of sweat beginning to form on his brow. He shouts, "Propadayu, propadayu! / I'm dying, oh I 'm dying!" The chorus begs the horses to slacken their pace, and his drawn out words are clearly said through clenched teeth. This is a man who is desperately trying to gain control, while at the same time acknowledging that life and death are beyond his control: "No chto-to koni mne popalis' priveredlivye / The horses that fell to my lot are unruly ones." The key word is "popalis." This verb is used when one happens to come across someone; there is a sense of chance and fate. The translation "falling to his lot" accurately captures this implication of destiny. Vysotsky continues the song: he both encourages the horses to faster speeds yet begs for them to slow down. By the third verse his voice sounds as if his throat has turned itself inside out from such dramatic exertion– he is hoarse and screaming. His voice rises with anguish, and at times his enunciation of each syllable is forced and spat rather than sung. There is no peace or real control, rather uncertainty, attempted rebellion, and finally forced resignation to fate: "My uspeli: v gosti k Bogu ne byvaet opozdannij / It's all over: guests to God cannot delay until the morrow."

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[40] Vladimir Vysotsky, "Unruly Horses," Kathryn Hamilton (trans), Ibid, 171, 173.

In Golstein's analysis of Lermontov's hero Pechorin, he states that Lermontov was intrigued by the problem and allure of fatalism. Golstein writes that fatalism and the search for a "master ideology" are strong temptations in traditional Russian thought.[41] Russian literature is filled with heroes fixated on finding the ultimate guiding light and with the desire to establish an understanding of their own fate.[42] This type of traditional thinking is found in Vysotsky's song. In fact, Vysotsky "expressed the quintessential Russian mentality probably better than anyone else . . . Vysotsky expressed the daredevil spirit, the desperate and happy-go-lucky confusion of the Russian people and at the same time a breadth of the soul."[43] Vysotsky is also remembered as a culmination of folk tradition – in him there were "several traditions that were close to the people's consciousness."[44] Like the traditional Russian heroes, Vysotsky struggled with a belief in fate and this produced a restless and rebellious spirit that ultimately led to the realization of his fears – he was unable to "tame" his allotted fate. The song reveals that there is a conflict between Vysotsky's free will and his belief in predestination. It is not that Vysotsky feared death; rather he struggled with the fear of it arriving early. He desperately resists but he ultimately believes in a fixed destiny. Such traditional thought is in direct opposition to Viktor Tsoi's understanding of death.

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[41] Golstein, 124; Chapter One, 62-63.

[42] Ibid, 123.

[43] Yuri Trifonov, "A Few Lines About Vladimir Vysotsky," in Andreyev and Boguslavsky, 345.

[44] David Samoilov, "My Aquaintanceship With Vysotsky," in Andreyev and Boguslavsky, 352.

In the previous chapter, Viktor Tsoi's song "Legenda / Legend" was explored.[45] While this song is an example of the special significance of death as part of the traditional heroic narrative, the main theme is that death is not something that is to be feared as a hindrance or as an ultimate confrontation with destiny. Rather, it is meeting death with courage not with rebellion or resignation that is the challenge. Possible reactions to death are fear (rebellion) or resignation as the first two lines indicate:

Sredi svyazok v gorle komom tesnitsya krik
No nastala pora i tyt uzh krichi ne krichi

The outcry is stuck in my throat
But the time has come, and either you cry out or you don't

The song creates a picture of the peaceful dead and it is the survivors who tremble in verse two: "I drozhala ruka u togo kto ostalsya zhiv / And how the hands of the one who survived were trembling." Tsoi does not seem to fear a fated death, but he does provide a message that life is worth more than reckless living or rebellion against fate. There is no need to prove that one is not afraid of death – it is important to live out your life – to keep the song going. There is no fear of dying an untimely fate and no wish to test destiny recklessly. The song concludes with these words:

A zhizn tol'ko slovo
Est' lish' lyubov' i est' smert'
Ej a kto budet pet' esli vse budut spat'?
Smert' stoit togo chtoby zhit'
A lyubov' stoit togo chtoby zhdat'[46]

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[45] Chapter Two, 127-128.

[46] Viktor Tsoi, "Legenda," *Gruppa krovi* ; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 329.

And "life" is just a word
There is only love and death
Who will be singing, if everyone will fall asleep?
Death is worth living,
And Love is worth waiting for...

Here, the hero does not rely on blind illusions of sacrifice to validate life; rather the value of life must be created in order to meet death courageously. Life must become more than a word, more than a sacrifice to death. The hero must be willing to live – now. As Domanskij states, the hero knows that "life must not be squandered."[47] He realizes that death is a fact, and ability to live in truth and acceptance provides the courage to meet death.

Tsoi's attitude is very similar to Lermontov's "philosophy of action" and belief in "indetermination." Lermontov provides a solution to the problem of free will and predestination by providing a pathway between rebellion and resignation to fate.[48] His hero Pechorin, refuses to believe in a particular cause or belief system and is thus in a state of constant alert – he is able to notice potential harm and act in accordance to avoid it.[49] He retains his freedom by not concerning himself with issues of predestination or clouding his mind with the search for a guiding ideology.[50]

Perhaps the main difference between Vysotsky and Tsoi is the relationship between the singer and his audience. Vysotsky's concern over his own death was rooted in his sense of public responsibility – he felt that it was his responsibility to

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[47] Domanskij, 39.

[48] Golstein, 125.

[49] Ibid, 125.

[50] Ibid, 125 – 126.

sing for his public. While Tsoi has some sense of civic responsibility, he also encouraged the audience to take up individual responsibility. He had no concern that they needed him personally to teach them. Instead, Tsoi advocated personal responsibility; he invited others to continue on in the song "Legend": "Ej a kto budet pet' esli vse budut spat'? / Who will be singing, if everyone will fall asleep?"

The traditional thought of Vysotsky was not very appealing to many of the younger age group during the Glasnost period.[51] Tsoi acknowledged that there was a connection between bard and rock music but he argued that the language and the poetic symbolism used by the bards were not believable to many in the younger generation and failed to connect with the new reality, coming across "like deception."[52] This new audience demanded a new outlook that embodied their own life themes. New Wave music, which is often how Tsoi's music is categorized, utilized some of the bard style – mainly the rough, street-language lyrics.[53] Perhaps bard music failed to capture the attention of many youth because of the distance of the Patriotic War. Vysotsky, although a child at the time of the war, and his contemporaries had some personal experience of the war and the struggles faced after the war. Bard songs were created in and for a specific community who had lived and had known a certain reality, and that was tied together by shared experience. The war experience was a great unifying force for the Soviet people. However, Tsoi's generation had lost that sense of unity or connection to the

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[51] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Molodoj Estonii,* 9 May 1988, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 200.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Troitsky, *Back in the USSR,* 63.

traditional value of sacrifice. Their reality was often one of alienation and uncertainty,[54] and these were themes on which the New Wave expounded on.

While the perception of death and responsibility are different, both Tsoi and Vysotsky share concern for the life of the song. Vysotsky cried out, "I dozhit' ne uspel, mne dopet' ne uspet' / *I've not lived out my life, I can't finish my song.*" His concern is for his responsibility to finish the song before his fated death. In Chapter One, Tsoi's song "Kukushka /The Cuckoo" is analyzed as a statement of free will.[55] However, the song shares a certain uneasiness found in Vysotsky's "Koni priveredlivye / Unruly Horses." Compare the to above-noted Vysotsky song to Tsoi's first verse of "The Cuckoo:"

Pesen eshche ne napisannykh skol'ko
Skazhi kukushka
Propoj
V gorode mne zhit' ili na vyselkakh
Kamnem lezhat'
Ili goret' zvezdoj
Zvezdoj

Solntse moyo vzglyani na menya
Moya ladon' prevratilas' v kulak
I esli est porokh daj ognya
Vot tak[56]

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[54] On Soviet teen alienation see Chapter Two, 111.

[55] Chapter One, 70-73.

[56] Viktor Tsoi, "Kukushka," *Chyornyj al'bom*, performed by Kino, recorded 1990, Yuri Kasparyan, Igor Tikhomirov (Producers), re-mastered at Studio MMD, Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 339-340.

How many songs are there still to sing?
Tell me cuckoo
Sing.
Am I to live in the city or on the move,
Lying on the ground
Or burning bright as a star.
As a star.

My sun – look down on me,
My hand has turned into a fist,
And if there's gunpowder – give me fire.
Like this.

Like Vysotsky, he dwells on the temptation of fatalism. He seems to agonize over a personal destiny. However, there is no concern about his personal ability to finish the song, rather it is a question of how many songs there are to sing. The song is again an invitation to the listener to take action – be his/her own hero. The manner in which he sings is very different to Vysotsky's dramatic shouting. Instead, Tsoi sings slowly with steady control. Like Vysotsky, who stands "on the brink," Tsoi holds out his fist in rebellion, but his song reflects an uncertainty about fixed fate rather than clear belief and resistance. He acknowledges the fact that death will be but he is not consumed by the worry over predetermination. He seems to mediate between resistance and resignation. The song is about acting on free will, expressing personal responsibility, and choosing to continue the song, rather than lamenting on one's personal powerlessness against fate.

Tsoi's dismissal of predestination is repeated in his song "Strannaya skazka / Strange Fairytale:"

Snova novyj nachinaetsya den'
Snova utro prozhektorom b'yot iz okna
I molchit telefon
Otklyuchyon
Snova solntsa na nebe net
Snova boj – kazhdyj sam za sebya
I mne kazhetsya solntse ne bol'she chem son

Na ekrane okna skazka s neschastlivim konstom
Strannaya skazka

I stuchit pulemetom dozhd'
I po ulitsam osen' idyot
I stena iz kirpichej – oblakov krepka
A derev'ya zaboleli chumoj
Zaboleli eshchyo vesnoj
Vniz letyat ladoni – list'ya
Makhavshie nam svysoka

Tam za oknom skazka s neschastlivym konstom
Strannaya skazka

A potom pridyot ona
Sobirajsya skazhet poshli
Otdaj zemle telo
Nu a telo ne dopelo chut'-chut'
Nu a telu nedodali lyubvi
Strannoe delo

Tam za oknom skazka s neschastlivym konstom
Strannaya skazka[57]

Again a new day begins
Again morning shines through the window like a projector
And the telephone is silent-
turned off
Again the sun isn't up in the sky
Again in the fight - everyone is for himself
And it seems to me that the sun is no more than a dream.

On the window screen is a story with an unhappy ending
A strange fairytale

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[57] Viktor Tsoi, "Strannaya skazka," *Zvezda po imeni solntse,* performed by Kino, recorded 1988-89, Valera Leont'ev (Producer), re-mastered at Studio MMD (Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996) , CD.; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 332.

And the rain comes down like machine gun fire
And along the streets autumn comes
And the wall of cloud-bricks is strong
But the trees fell ill with the plague
And were sick even in the spring
Palm-leaves fly downward
Waving to us condescendingly

There outside the window is a story with an unhappy ending
A strange fairytale

And then she will come
And she will say get ready to go
Give your body to the earth
But your body hadn't finished singing
And your body hadn't been loved enough
It's a strange thing

There outside the window is a story with an unhappy ending
A strange fairytale

The song opens with a synthesizer gently padding chords, and guitar, bass, and subtle drumming fill out the sound. The instrumental is slow and lasts for over forty seconds. Then Viktor Tsoi sings the sad words in a light, relaxed manner. The chorus comes alive with louder drumming and Tsoi's intonation suggests a calm understanding of the cycle of life – there is no rush or indication that he wishes to restrain death – the "unhappy ending" is just a "fairytale." Death exists but there is no point in agonizing over a predetermined expiration.[58] After the second chorus an electric guitar performs the solo in an instrumental break that continues for forty seconds. The third verse that Tsoi sings suggests the coming of death. The first and fourth phrase of this verse stand out as the melodic line is higher, suggesting that the presence of death and the wish to finish the song are dominant. However, there is a sense of dealing with the situation when it comes, there is no rush to resolve

[58] Domanskij provides this song as an example of the hero's realizaion that life must not be wasted, despite inevitable death. Domanskij, 39.

anything or understand his destiny, as it sounds like he does not believe in fixed destiny anyway. Tsoi's way of life is acting on situations as they come: "I behave how I consider is necessary in whatever situation."[59]

As in Vysotsky's song, the completion of the music or one's creative mission, a kind of fulfillment prior to death is of great concern. However, in Tsoi's song this desire to finish singing is resolved with the realization that these desires are "a strange thing." Tsoi's voice does not falter with emotion and the mood generated is one that death will happen and it is not worth being agitated about the fact. Like Lermontov's Pechorin he does not concern himself with the problem of predestination.[60] Tsoi even treats this section with a sense of detachment. He projects these desires for completion and fulfillment onto someone else – it is "your body" not "my body." The narration is one of witnessing death, yet he seems unafraid and strangely waiting rather than trying to push death away. The song ends with a lengthy instrumental that fades out, producing the effect of a story without any real conclusion – nothing is predetermined, it is not truth, only a "fairytale." The lack of finality is reminiscent of Tsoi's character's death in *Igla*, where the audience sees that he is fatally stabbed; yet he shuffles away down the walk into the night.[61] There is no final resolution, and death and life are seamless and co-exist. Death is just a part of life. The hero can bravely meet death, if he has courageously lived life.

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[59] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Sovetskaya molodezh',* Riga, 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 206.

[60] Chapter One, 48-49.

[61] For an understanding on the role Tsoi's film parts contributed to his mythic status see: Domanskij, 32-34.

As stated in the Introduction, the song creates a way of life, a reality or a way to understand the world. The Soviet literary critic Oleg Panov follows this line of thought saying that rock is " the folklore of the Scientific Technical Revolution" and must be taken seriously.[62] Soviet youth expressed that Russian rock was a source of identity and knowledge: "If a person begins to listen to all [different kinds of music] . . . he will acquire a great deal of knowledge because practically all music has a philosophical dimension, whatever style it is, our rock that is".[63] It is significant that the speaker qualifies his statement with the adjective *our* to the noun rock. He is clearly suggesting that *Russian* rock delivers a higher and more accessible degree of the "philosophical dimension."

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[62] Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture Entertainment and Society Since 1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992) , 193.

[63] Hilary Pilkington, "Reconfiguring 'the West'" in ed. Hilary Pilkington et al. *Looking West? Cultural Globalization and Russian Youth Cultures*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002) , 183.

During Glasnost, there was a rise in nationalism,[64] and evidence of "political fermentation" and a search for a new identity. Political dissident messages appeared as graffiti in greater quantity than previously witnessed.[65] While other youth wished to remain soulful, avoiding the political arena and listening to rhetoric; a "cynicism" that was, in a way, participation in public discourse by purposely choosing not to choose.[66] The music of the last few years of the Soviet Union echoed this "philosophical dimension" or search. Troitsky wrote that the late 1980s "provided rockers with new energy and a thirst for responsibility."[67]

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[64] Fred Coleman wrote that nationalism was a very complex issue, and he broke it down into six different problems: the first, were the "Independence Movements" of the conquered nations like the Baltics, which sought autonomy; second, there were "Ethnic Conflicts" over land between minorities that were difficult yet necessary for the Soviet government to deal with (the example of Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno Karabakh is given); thirdly, the "Divided Peoples", where expansion and republic boundary creations had separated peoples (Romanians in Moldavia); fourthly, the "Displaced Peoples" like the Tatars who were deported to the Crimea in 1944 and were still demanding their right to return to their land; fifthly, those "Disadvantaged Peoples" of ethnic minorities who had too small a population to form their own republic (Chechens in Russia); and lastly, "Russian Nationalism" which grew out of a sense of frustration with never being able to reach its full potential as a result of the sharing of Russian wealth with the poorer republics. This was complicated, as many Russians had grown used to their obligation but with the rise of independence movements many Russians felt that the "ingrates" could break away and Russia would thrive: Fred Coleman, *The Decline and Fall of the Soviet Empire: Forty Years That Shook The World, From Stalin To Yeltsin* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1996) , 277-280.
The results of a study by Fran Markowitz on Russian nationalism also indicate a further problem of Russian-Soviet identity. As the dominant state in the Soviet Union, many young Russians commented on a sense of guilt over the actions of the Soviet state. Many youth preferred a sense of spiritual rather than a national identity: a sense of "Russianness" as multi-cultural and learned rather than blood: Markowitz, "Not Nationalists: Russian Teenagers' Soulful A-Politics," in *Europe-Asia Studies*. Vol. 51, No.7 (November, 1999) : 1183-1198.

[65] Bushnell, 113.

[66] Markowitz, 1195.

[67] Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 127.

The music of Igor' Tal'kov is an important representative of what can be termed Patriotic rock. Tal'kov's music is an essential comparison to Tsoi's music because these two musicians are considered as sharing similar thematic interests,[68] they were contemporaries, and Tal'kov even claimed they were best friends in life (something that is not recorded in Tsoi's documents and friends' remembrances). If the friendship is uncertain, there is no doubt that Tal'kov regarded Tsoi as a genius, as he wrote a song about the death of Tsoi, which will be discussed below.[69]

Igor' Vladimirovich Tal'kov, born on 4 November 1956, was the second son of a poor family living in Shchekino, about 201 kilometres from Moscow.[70] The family was not permitted to live in Moscow as his father had been sent into exile for ten years during the Stalinist regime, (most likely due to the family's participation in the Tsarist Army during the revolution and civil war).[71] This information regarding his father's exile was not revealed to Tal'kov until the former's death in 1978, and perhaps this news stirred in him a political revelation - he never could forget the injustice done to his family.[72]

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[68] Aleksandr Bobrov, " Ikh vstretyat – poety," in A. V. Krokhmalyuk (ed.), *Oborvannaya struna: pesni, stikhi Viktora Tsoya i Igorya Tal'kova, materially ob ikh zhizni i tvorchestve*, (Moscow: Sovremenyj pisatel', 1993) , 3.

[69] Igor Talkov, "Pamyati Viktora Tsoya," in A. V. Krokhmalyuk, 8; audio recording in mp3 format, "Pamyati Igorya Tal'kova posvyashchaetsya / Dedicated to Memory of Igor Talkov," at http://www.tal-sky.ru/en/pages/songs.php#es4, 30 March 2006.

[70] Ol'ga Dubovitskaya, "Tal'kov," in Krokhmalyuk, 83.

[71] Ibid, 84.

[72] Ibid.

Tal'kov completed ten years of schooling but dropped out of technical school because he "began to understand that these studies would give [him] nothing, and only take away."[73] As a self-taught musician, he supported himself by performing traditional Russian and older western rock songs at hotels and restaurants. Tal'kov remembered this experience as being humiliating as he longed to create and sing his own music.[74] At twenty-one, Tal'kov married and eventually, like Tsoi, he had a son.[75]

In 1974 he started to compose his own music, but it was not until 1987 that he attempted to sing it. His first publicly recognized song was "Chistye prudy / Pure Ponds." His songs are above all very political. Unlike Tsoi, he admitted to a commitment to political warfare and was a self-taught pre-revolutionary historian. He claimed that the Soviet Union had been in a spiritual war for seventy years and that Glasnost was the same regime under another name.[76] His musical style draws more from Russian traditional song and instrumentation (the accordion is often used) and in an interview he admits that Russian theatre song had a strong influence on his writing.[77] This more traditional style rather than a more western rock sound was very palatable to many people, because they perferred cultural

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[73] Igor Tal'kov, interview with Dmitri khakhalev-Klimov, "Smerti ya ne boyus'," in "Pamyati Igorya Tal'kova posvyashchaetsya / Dedicated to Memory of Igor Talkov," http://www.tal-sky.ru/en/index.php, 30 March 2006.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Dubovitskaya, 87.

[76] Bobrov, 5.

[77] Igor Tal'kov, interview with Dmitri Khakhalev-Klimov.

conformity and often dismissed new sounds.[78] Although he was a very gifted multi-instrumentalist, Tal'kov's innovation was to merge a fully- ensembled and dramatic sound with straightforward cutting lyrics.

On 6 October 1991, while backstage at his concert in St. Petersburg he was fatally shot. His manager Valerij Schlvaman was found guilty but was never arrested as he managed to flee to Israel. Many fans insist that Ta'lkov was murdered by the Soviet government, while for others he became a "Patriot martyr." Extreme nationalist groups continue to suggest that the Jewish Schlvaman murdered their hero Tal'kov as part of a Jewish conspiracy.[79] Either way, Tal'kov became a significant symbol of the fermenting Soviet identity and rising power of the crowd. The late 1980s nurtured a star system that with its growing audience numbers, reflected the public's will to choose new symbols of identity, and for many, a sense of empowerment in the political arena.

Tal'kov' s life philosophy, the identity he offered to his followers, is revealed in his song about the death of Viktor Tsoi entitled "Pamyati Viktora Tsoya / In Memory of Viktor Tsoi:"

Poety ne rozhdayutsya sluchajno,
Oni letyat na zemlyu s vysoty,
Ikh zhizn' okruzhena glubokoj tajnoj,
Khotya oni otkryty i prosty.

Glaza takikh bozhestvennykh poslantsev
Vsegda pechal'ny i verny mechte,
I v khaose problem ikh dushi vechno svetyat
Miram, chto zabludilis' v temnote.

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[78] Cushman, 87.

[79] Yevgeny Shchekatikhin, editor of *Nashe Otechestvo,* interview with Radio Islam, "I don't want my children to be slaves of the Jews," 7 December 2001, <www.radioislam.org/interviews/chikatichi.html>, 15 May 2006.

Oni ukhodyat, vypolniv zadan'e,
Ikh otzyvayut Vysshie Miry,
Nevedomye nashemu soznan'yu,
Po pravilam kosmicheskoj igry.

Oni ukhodyat, ne dopev kupleta,
Kogda v ikh chest' orkestr igraet tush
Aktery, muzykanty i poety –
Tseliteli ustavshikh nashikh dush.

V lesakh ikh pesni ptitsy dopevayut,
V polyakh dlya nikh tsvety venki sov'yut,
Oni ukhodyat vdal', no nikogda ne umirayut
I v pesnyakh i v stikhakh svoikh zhivut.

A mozhet byt', segodnya ili zavtra
Ujdu I ya tainstvennym gontsom
Tuda, kuda ushel, ushel ot nas vnezapno
Poet I kompozitor Viktor Tsoj.[80]

Poets are not born randomly
They fly to earth from the heavens
Their life is surrounded by deep secret
Although they are open and simple.

The eyes of such godly messengers
Are always sad and faithfully dream
And in the chaos of problems, their souls eternally shine
On a world lost in the darkness

They depart, after carrying out their mission,
And are taken by the highest world.
Unknown to our consciousness,
According to the rules of the celestial game.

They depart without having finished singing the verse
When an orchestra plays a flourish in their honour
Actors, musicians and poets –
They are the healers of our soul.

In the forests, birds have learned to sing their songs
In the fields, flowers become wreaths of for them
They have gone afar, but never will they die
For they live -both in their songs and verses.

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[80] *Igor Talkov, "Pamyati Viktora Tsoya,"* in Krokhmalyuk , 8.

But perhaps today or tomorrow
Even I will become a mysterious messenger
There, where he went to, when he suddenly left us
The poet and composer – Viktor Tsoi.

The song is heavy with dark synthesizer and electronic wind. It is orchestrated in a way to suggest heavenly mystery. Tal'kov sings with intense feeling. The saxophone echoes parts of the melodic theme as he narrates his desire to join the poets. The music stops dramatically as he whispers low against the silence, "The poet and composer – Viktor Tsoi." The music comes in again full force and lingers on for a few measures.

Tal'kov was not afraid of death[81] and was not one to dwell on it.[82] His song reveals that he had deep respect for death and the possibility of an afterlife. The song tells the story of a poet-genius who is a messenger of truth and eventually taken back to heaven. The relaying of truth is the central idea to meeting death courageously. The poet is sent to perform this task and is then received back into the heavenly-realm. Tal'kov, like many other Russians, found meaning in spiritualism. He was a believer in reincarnation, inner strength, humanism, God and what he calls the cosmic realm.[83] His songs have a strong religious sense about them and include the belief in the future glory of Russia,[84] in which artists, musicians, and other creative geniuses play significant roles. At his funeral many

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[81] Tal'kov, interview with Khakhatev-Klimov.

[82] Dubovitskaya, 94.

[83] Ibid, 87.

[84] For example see Tal'kov's song "Rossiya / Russia," in Krokhmalyuk, 95-96.

people sang the lines of his song, "Ya vernus' / I'll return."[85] The song describes a poet (Tal'kov) returning from war, perhaps in another form, and years later to assist the battle over Russia. Tal'kov is the god-poet who vows to save Russia.

The promise of the poet to aid his followers is similar to Viktor Tsoi's "Ver' mne / Believe Me:"

Oglyanis'.
Eto draka bez prava na otdykh
Lishnij den'
Dnem bolshe, dnem men'she
Noch'
Okurok s oplavlennym filt'trom
Broshennyj tem
Kto khochet umeret' molodym

Ver' mne I ya sdelayu vse chto ty khochesh'
Ver' mne ya znayu nam nado byt' vmeste
Ver' mne I ya budu s toboj v etoj drake
Daj mne vse chto ty mozhesh' mne dat'

Spi
Ya znayu kak stavit' chasy'
Zavtra zvonok
Podnimet nas kak rvanye flagi
Govoryat chto son
Eto staraya pamyat'
A potom nam govoryat
Chto my dolzhny spat' spokojno

Ver' mne I ya sdelayu vse chto ty khochesh'
Ver' mne ya znayu nam nado byt' vmeste
Ver' mne I ya budu s toboj v etoj drake
Daj mne vse chto ty mozhesh' mne dat'[86]

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[85] "Pamyati Igorya Tal'kova posvyashchaetsya / Dedicated to Memory of Igor Talkov," <www.tal-sky.ru>

[86] Viktor Tsoi, "Ver' mne," *Eto ne lyubov',* performed by Kino, recorded 1985, Aleksej Vishnya (Producer), re-mastered at Studio MMD (Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996), CD; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 314-315.

Look around
This is a fight without the right to rest
Another day
More in the day – less in the day
Night
Cigarette butt with a fused filter
Abandon those
Who want to die young

Believe me and I will do everything that you want
Believe me and I know we should be together
Believe me and I will be with you in the fight
Give me everything that you can

Sleep
I know how to set the time
Tomorrow the bell
Will raise us like torn flags
They say that sleep
It's an old memory
But then they tell us
That we must sleep peacefully

Believe me and I will do everything that you want
Believe me and I know we should be together
Believe me and I will be with you in the fight
Give me everything that you can

The similarity between Tsoi and Tal'kov lies in the theme of truth. Both musicians believed in the importance of exposing the truth. They met the promises of Glasnost with confrontation and demands for real change. This is similar to Golstein's definition of the Lermontovian hero. The hero will destroy the illusions of others, believing only in "the hope of dying courageously."[87] Tsoi sings that he will be with his fans in the fight, but the song is limited to the daily struggles and routine, and the nation includes more than Russia. There is confrontation and willpower but no god-like power; he does what he can. There is no great wish to die to join the gods. Instead he warns people to avoid those who would die young. He does not envision

[87] Golstein, 128.

himself changing his country. In fact, Tsoi said that he does not occupy himself with politics.[88] He was fairly indifferent to the State.

Yet Tal'kov had great hopes for the future of Russia and for himself. He imagined returning to Russia in a future life, perhaps as a god (after all his dedication to Tsoi states that poets are god-geniuses.) His songs are reminiscent of the great vision expressed by the 19th century Russian intellectual Peter Chaadaev:"[The] time for blind love is past . . .I love my country . . .. Mine is not, I admit, that sanctimonious, lazy patriotism which manages to see everything in a rosy light . . .. I am eager for [Russia's] glory . . .."[89] Igor' Tal'kov promises to return for that future glory.

However, Viktor Tsoi does not vow to return. His image and his early death may have incited a legendary status but it was not his intention to become a god to anyone.[90] He sings, "Zakroj za mnoj dver' ya ukhozhu[91] / Close the door behind me, I'm leaving"[92] not "I will return." In an interview he was told, "You know for many youth you're a light in the window." Tsoi replied that they should not create an

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[88] Gasparyan, 239.

[89] Peter Chaadaev, "Apology of a Madman," *Peter Yakovlevich Chaadaev: Philosophical Letters & Apology of a Madman* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1969) , 173-174.

[90] Despite Tsoi's intentions, his death promoted the creation of a god-like status. Mike Naumenko, a friend and musician, lamented over the fact that Tsoi was a simple guy and not the god fans were creating him into since his death: Domanskij, 44.

[91] Viktor Tsoi, "Zakroj za mnoj dver'," *Gruppa krovi*; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 324.

[92] Viktor Tsoi, "Zakroj za mnoj dver'," *Gruppa krovi* ; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 324; Chapter Two, 95-97.

idol.[93] The majority of his songs are fixated in the present rather than the future. He offers an identity of an ordinary Soviet man[94] attempting to deal with problems as they come.

Viktor Tsoi's everyday street philosophy, which focused on the present, rather than the future, is reminiscent of the 1970s British Punk movement. This connection is not an exaggerated or forced relationship and the impact of the British music scene is defended by Borzykin of the Soviet band Televisor / Television: "I think the industry, the port, the northernness of the city [Leningrad], the weather, even partly the architecture of the city contributed to very close bonds to England, the UK and British rock."[95] This is credible as the influence and significance of The Beatles on the Soviet public has been much discussed. However, the effect of other groups, or movements, such as Punk, require further defense.[96] The manifestation of

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[93] Viktor Tsoi, interview, *Leninskaya stena,* Alma-Ata, May 1989, in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 210.

[94] "Soviet" is stressed because Viktor Tsoi, when compared to the full Russian by blood Tal'kov, was a true Soviet in the sense that he was of mixed origin. The kind of "patriotic martyr" syndrome that surrounded Tal'kov was not found in Tsoi's death. It seems that nationalism was perhaps more alluring to those who could or chose to establish a heritage or bloodline.
Fran Markowitz discussed the connection between a Russian "blood" identity and Russian nationalism. The youth she interviewed, felt they did not belong to any one race or nation and defined their "Russianness" as a soul identity. Others preferred the soul identity because blood identity was linked to Nazi policies: Markowitz, 1186, 1188.

[95] "Borzykin, Mikhail," interview by Y. B. Steinholt, 22 September 2001, St. Petersburg, At www.hf.uib.no/i/russik/steinholt.rir_files.html, 4.

[96] Andrei Tropillo, believes that there is a large amount of "Punk" in Soviet and Russian music. He claims that over 99 percent of Russian rock is in the spirit of punk, and he grounds this punk style to the traditions of the old Slavic *skomorochi* (jesters), who were the "cornerstone of Russian artistry.": Tropillo, Andrei. Interview by Y. B. Steinholt, 11 June 2002. AnTrop studio and record plant, Ulitsa Tsvetochnaia, St. Petersburg, at www.hf.uib.no/i/russik/steinholt.rir_files.html. , 32.

the British Punk style of dress and western Punk related graffiti support the existence of western Punk influence on Soviet youth. Bushnell stated that in the early 1980s the popularity of Punk in the Soviet Union was expressed through style (wearing safety pins, crosses and anarchist symbols), and graffiti (anarchist symbols and other punk logos, and even Western Punk song lyrics).[97] Cushman remarks on the presence of Sex Pistols tee shirts and even comments on this style as related to images of Viktor Tsoi:

> If Lenin was to be seen everywhere, on subway walls, buildings, and in offices, then the visage of antiheroes such as . . . Viktor was to be seen on the walls of private homes, in the personal space of one's automobile, or inscribed as graffiti in public places as acts of resistance which reclaimed public space for the self . . . The countercultural style was bound to include elements which sought to reject these dominant styles at every juncture: Sex Pistols tee shirts, headbands made from Soviet flags, spiked cowboy boots, [and] long hair.[98]

The passage above shares a key concept of the Punk movement: the prioritization of the individual. While punk cannot be defined philosophically as having a concrete agenda, it does include a political conscience, ideas of nihilism, and, above all else, the belief in a "do-it-yourself" spontaneity.[99] Punk culture values independence and individualism. Like Lermontov, the punk attempted to carve out a space for the individual. In fact, the Romantic Movement at the time of Lermontov

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[97] Bushnell, 135, 140.

[98] Cushman, 189.

[99] Roger Sabin, *Punk Rock: So What? The Cultural Legacy of Punk* (New York: Routledge, 1999) , 2-3. This book is a collection of essays on the Punk movement that provides a multi-dimensional and multi-national look at the movement, including style, art, politics, and feminism.

was seen as a subversive culture much like Punk was viewed as threat; Romanticism became a term synonymous with anarchy, precisely because of its individualism.[100]

The punk movement came rather slowly to the Soviet Union. Artemy Troitsky lists four possible reasons. The first was a psychological reason that Soviet rockers desired respect and were tired of being called hooligans; the second, was that much of the listening public still enjoyed disco; the third reason was that many Soviet rock musicians did not want to connect themselves with something that was called fascist in the British press; and lastly that, in Troitsky's opinion, the melodic tradition was too strong to make the loud, frantic punk style appealing to a large group.[101] However, punk culture did arrive and it was popular among many urban youth. Komsomol Secretary Viktor Mironenko stated that punk culture was attractive to youth because they "react in a simplistic way to social injustice and our failure to match words with deeds . . .. The quest is for an idol."[102]

A brief history of the English Punk group the Sex Pistols and the analysis of their most infamous song "God Save The Queen," will be used to facilitate the analysis of the Punk rock influence on Viktor Tsoi. Artemy Troitsky, a friend and mentor of Tsoi's, said of the Sex Pistols, "They're not just drunken, decrepit misfits. They play intense music and have enormous energy. They're nihilists, but they have something to say about social questions; and they don't come on as clinical

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[100] Sigrid McLaughlin in Ed. Hans Eichner, 1972, 440-443.

[101] Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 49.

[102] James Riordan, "Soviet Youth: Pioneers of Change," *Soviet Studies*. Vol. 40, No. 4 (October 1988) : 567.

idiots."[103] This statement clearly illustrates that Soviet rock and the music of the Sex Pistols shared a social or political consciousness.[104] The Sex Pistols are also recognized as one of the most defining groups in the development of British punk culture, and more importantly to our study, Tsoi parodied their style in his song recorded between 1985 and 1986, "Mama Anarkhiya / Mama Anarchy:"

Soldat shyol po ulitse domoj
I uvidel etikh rebyat
"Kto vasha mama, rebyata?" –
Sprosil u rebyat soldat

"Mama – anarkhiya
Papa – stakan portvejna!"

Vse oni v kozhanykh kurtkakh
Vse oni ne bol'shogo rosta
Khotel soldat projti mimo
No eto bylo ne prosto

"Mama – anarkhiya
Papa – stakan portvejna!"

Dovol'no veseluyu shutku
Sygrali s soldatom rebyata
Raskrasili krasnym I sinim
Zastavlyali rugat'sya matom

"Mama – anarkhiya
Papa – stakan portvejna!"[105]

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[103] Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 70.

[104] Another point of comparison between the Punk movement and Russian rock is the artistic connections between Dada and Absurdism. Marcus Greil provides a lengthy discussion of the Sex Pistols and their Dada origins: Marcus Greil, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[105] Viktor Tsoi, "Mama anarkhiya," *Noch'*, performed by Kino, recorded 1985-6, Andrey Tropillo (Producer), re-mastered at Studio MMS (Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996), CD; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 320. This song is acknowledged as being a Sex Pistols parody, Ibid.

A soldier was walking home,
And he met these guys
"Hey guys, who's your mother?"
The soldier asked them

Mama is anarchy
Papa - a glass of portwine!

All of them wore leather jackets,
All of them were not very tall.
The soldier tried to move past them,
But it wasn't easy at all.

Mama is anarchy
Papa - a glass of portwine!

A rather unusual joke
Those guys played on the soldier
They painted his face red and blue,
And they forced him to swear.

Mama is anarchy
Papa - a glass of portwine!

The sound of this song is unmistakably like the Sex Pistols – it is fast, loud and with a primal rhythm. More specifically the downward four-chord progression provided by the electric guitar and bass guitar are harmonically reminiscent of the progression found in the Sex Pistol's "Holiday in the Sun."[106] Tsoi's song pokes fun at the punk images of hooliganism but at the same time he is making a valid social judgment. He sings that his generation is born out of anarchy and illusions (alcohol is one traditional way to deal with life through illusion). This statement is echoed in a letter from a punk in the journal *Yunost'*, where he writes, " We Punks are your children . . . you've made us like this – by your duplicity and your lies . . .."[107] The

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[106] John Lydon, "Holiday in the Sun," *Never mind the bollocks, here's the Sex Pistols,* performed by the Sex Pistols, recorded 1977, re-release(Scarborough: Warner Brothers, 1980 to 1996). CD. This song was a protest against the Berlin Wall.

[107] *Yunost'*, No. 6, 1988, in Riordan and Bridger, 51.

song was increasingly popular and by 1988, in Moscow, the words "Mama anarkhia, papa stakan portveina" became graffiti outside rock community haunts.[108] The "anarchy" expressed by young punks was more about finding a "space for disenfranchised voices to be heard."[109] This focus was on words, and the freedom of the individual, rather than violence. In fact, many punks in the Soviet Union were pacifists.[110] The power of the word over violence was recognized by youth. The song was written around the time of the anti-alcohol campaign.[111] Graffiti on the walls that declared alcohol as a father, can be viewed as a declaration of individual rights over state control. The message seems to state that alcohol is a birthright.

Themes of anarchy and a young generation born out of social chaos are similar to those found in the Sex Pistols' music. Tsoi's treatment of war, isolation, sadness, fear of change, feelings of the need for action, loss and leaving all fit within

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[108] Bushnell, 143.

[109] Sabin, 4.

[110] Bushnell, 135.

[111] The anti-alcohol campaign was initiated by the Central Committee on 7 May 1985. It arose out of the recognition of a wide social problem that was affecting further reforms, economic losses due to drunkenness, and public pressure. The campaign failed, rapidly declining by the fall of 1987,and the authorities reinstated alcohol sales in January 1988. The failure was a reflection of a central administered approach, which lacked clear goals and was implemented crudely. See: Michael Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1995) , 221, 222; Richard Sakwa, *Gorbachev and His Reforms* (Toronto: Philip Allan, 1990), 301; Stephen White, *Russia Goes Dry: Alcohol, State and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 189. Another popular reason for the failure, was that alcoholism was not recognized as a complex issue– for example, "cures" were often jail time: Vladimir Treml, "A Noble Experiment? Gorbachev's Anti-Drinking Campaign," in Maurice Freidberg and Heyward Isham, eds., *Soviet Society Under Gorbachev: Current Trends and the Prospect For Reform* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1987) , 52-75.

the thematic realm of the Sex Pistols. Tsoi and The Sex Pistols became representations of the new youth's energy and anxiety. They became symbols of generations that were born into changing social landscapes, insecurity, and loss of unity. Although Tsoi is considered more new wave, Punk has also been acknowledged as related to the new wave movement.[112] The terms were often used interchangeably or, in some cases, for the purpose of softening a group's image in order to access performance venues. Many Soviet new wave artists considered the English groups of the 1970s as major influences.[113]

The Sex Pistols were formed out of a group of young working class boys who frequented a unique fashion shop owned by Malcolm McLaren in London. In part they were a manufactured group as McLaren chose John Lydon, who was unknown to the other band mates, as the lead singer, in addition to claiming that he conceived of the name Sex Pistols. The group was John Lydon (Johnny Rotten), Steve Jones, Paul Cook, and Glen Mattlock (later replaced by John Beverly / Sid Vicious). All the members came from the working class and were born into unstable families. At the time of the group's formation in the mid-1970s, many people in the United Kingdom felt dissatisfied, confused or angry because the Labour Party had not met its promises, and the system showed signs of failure: garbage strikes, social riots, IRA bombings and unemployment. Julian Temple's documentary, *The Filth and*

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[112] John Savage, *England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock, and Beyond* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2001) , 159.

[113] Cushman, 42-43.

the Fury, connects this anarchic environment with the rise of the Sex Pistols.[114] In addition to social upheaval, there was a lack of real heroes. John Lydon, in an early interview stated, "Heroes? I don't have any heroes. They are useless . . . None are accessible."[115] Punk historian, John Savage captured the feelings of John Lydon's circle of friends: " The group were caught in an impossible double-blind: intelligent in a working class culture which did not value intelligence, yet unable to leave that culture because of lack of opportunity. The result? An appalling frustration."[116] This statement regarding limited opportunity is very similar to Lermontov's poem "Monolog / A Monologue" analyzed in Chapter One:[117]

> Pover', nichtozhestvo est' blago v zdeshnem svete.
> K chemu glubokie poznan'ya, zhazhda slavy,
> Talant i pylkaya lyubov' svobody,
> Kogda my ikh upotrebit' ne mozhem?
>
> *Yes, mediocrity among us is a blessing.*
> *What use is pride in deeper knowledge, lust for glory,*
> *Unflinching love of liberty, and talent,*
> *If in our world not one of us can use them!*[118]

The band played its first gig covering other groups' songs (yet transformed by Lydon's ironic touch) at St. Martins School of Art and Design in London in November of 1975. Lydon was soon recognized as the image, personality, and

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[114] Scene 1 "Crowd of England," in *The Filth and the Fury: A Sex Pistols Film*, Dir. Julien Temple (Montreal, Quebec: New Line Home Video / Alliance Atlantis / Fin Line Features, 2000) , DVD.

[115] Scene 6 "Performing," *The Filth and the Fury.*

[116] Savage, 114.

[117] Chapter One, 33.

[118] Mikhail Lermontov, "Monolog", in Anatoly Liberman, trans. *Mikhail Lermontov: Major Poetical Works* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983) , 34, 35.

lyricist of the group. He had a trademark steely glare that he took advantage of to full effect.[119] Through Lydon's stage antics of insulting the audience through shouts, sneers and spit, in addition to his bodily posture (often contorted), the Sex Pistols acquired a large fan base and a punk scene arose with other bands following. Punk was the return of the "anti-hero." Punk meant anyone could be his/her own hero. The god-like status of the rock star was abandoned for a more ordinary hero. Steve Jones remembers playing the three-chord anthems of the Sex Pistols, and said that these songs proved "anybody could do this."[120]

The Sex Pistols soon had difficulty finding performance venues as their shows had a notoriety of inciting public revolt. The media pounced on this infamous image and punk was described as a social threat. The image, and often the reality of their disruptive behavior, caused the group to lose two contracts: one with EMI (October 1976 – January 1977), and the second with A&M (10 March 1977 –11 March 1977). Despite, and perhaps because of, this unsavory reputation record companies were still interested in the group and finally Virgin Records signed them in the spring of 1977.

They reached the height of their fame with the song "God Save the Queen" in 1977. Due to the release of this controversial "second anthem" during the Queen's Silver Jubilee on 7 June, the Sex Pistols found themselves under a media boycott and verbal abuse. Lydon recalls his own recognition of the song's public reception:

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[119] The stare was actually a physical defect, resulting from meningitis as a child: Savage, 115.

[120] Scene 7 "Anti-Star," in *The Filth and the Fury*.

"We'd declared war on England without meaning to."[121] Finally, public feelings escalated to the point of physical attacks on both Lydon and Cook. Lydon was met in a parking lot and cut with bottles, knives and a machete by a gang shouting, "We love our Queen, you bastard!"[122] Banned from radio and live performance, and fearing for their lives, the Sex Pistols fled England for a European tour, returning to England under the name SPOTS (Sex Pistols On Tour) for a secret tour of the country in August, and ending their career as Sex Pistols in America.

Their last concert was in San Francisco on 14 January 1978. Footage of the event shown in the film *The Filth and the Fury*, reveals a tired band, a stoned Sid Vicious attempting to keep a rhythmic bass line, and a very jaded and alienated Johnny Rotten in front of a seething, manic crowd of over 5,000.[123] Lydon's voice over in this scene states that the band was not talking to each other at this point, mainly due to Sid's drug habit and the preference shown to Jones and Cook by McLaren. Sid and Lydon were not paid and often isolated by McLaren and their band mates. The show ends after six songs, and Lydon cuts the last song short exclaiming, "Oh bollocks, why should I carry on?" After a few more lines and the song concludes. Lydon says to the crowd: "Did you ever get the feeling you've been cheated?" On 17 January 1978 the band went their separate ways.

What had begun as a celebration of individualism and the independent voice had become a limited manufactured image of nihilism. This image was carried to the extreme by Sid Vicious (John Beverly) who a few months later that year went on trial

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[121] Scene 13 "God Save the Queen," *The Filth and the Fury.*

[122] Savage, 365.

[123] Scene 17 "America," *The Filth and the Fury.*

for the murder of his girlfriend Nancy Spungeon. While on bail, Beverly committed suicide.

Initially, punk was referred to as "street rock" until magazines and fanzines solidified the use of the term "punk."[124] This word was chosen because it already signified a meaning of being the "lowest;" "punk" was used to define the marginalized, the outcasts, and in its basest meaning it was connected to prison life and hustlers.[125] The punk movement was about the power of the lowest – the undistinguished people of the "crowd."[126] The movement provided one way to politicize the crowd. The crowd could choose to support punk stars such as Johnny Rotten and Sid Vicious of the Sex Pistols. Thus, the audience-crowd, with their support of the punk star, became part of the power struggle between traditional authorities (governments) and the individual.

The Sex Pistol's "God Save The Queen" is an example of the young punk crowd of England voicing their concerns about a failing system through the star, Johnny Rotten:

> God save the queen
> The fascist regime
> They made you a moron
> Potential H-bomb

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[124] Savage, 130.

[125] Ibid, 131, 139.

[126] For a definition of "crowd" see Marshall, 4. In addition "crowd" was used in Scene 1, *The Filth and the Fury*. The scene shows a royal scroll, on which the words "The Crown of England" are written, and the word "crown" crossed out and replaced with "crowd." This clearly signified the empowerment of the masses over the figure of traditional authority.

God save the queen
She ain't no human being
There is no future
In England's dreaming

Don't be told what you want
Don't be told what you need
There's no future, no future,
No future for you

God save the queen
We mean it man
We love our queen
God saves

God save the queen
'Cause tourists are money
And our figurehead
Is not what she seems

Oh God save history
God save your mad parade
Oh Lord God have mercy
All crimes are paid

When there's no future
How can there be sin
We're the earth in the dustbin
We're the poison in your human machine
We're the future, you're future

God save the queen
We mean it man
We love our queen
God saves

God save the queen
We mean it man
And there is no future
In England's dreaming

No future, no future,
No future for you
No future, no future,
No future for me

No future, no future,
No future for you

No future, no future
For you[127]

Johnny Rotten snarls and shouts his way through the song, over the din of drums and fast strumming guitars. Like Tal'kov and Tsoi, he attacks the illusion of a united and prosperous nation. Many organizers and public figures agonized over the staging of the Queen's Jubilee because they knew that the public lacked trust in the idea of English power – Welsh and Scottish nationalism was high and there was still civil war in Northern Ireland.[128] Savage states that the media had no dissenting voice[129] and so this song became one alternate voice. The song was banned by media and by retailers, yet still over 150,000 copies were sold in five days.[130] "God Save the Queen" had managed to show that the voice of Rotten had support.

The song revealed a philosophy that Rotten's audience found attractive. In this worldview, there is no fear of death because there is "no future."[131] Here is the return of Lermontovian anti-hero who admits no answers and makes no promises, he chooses to live in a world of negatives: " What do I expect of the future? Absolutely nothing."[132] Like Pechorin, the Sex Pistols concentrated on the present

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[127] John Lydon, "God Save The Queen," *Never mind the bollocks, here's the Sex Pistols,* performed by the Sex Pistols, recorded 1977, re-release (Scarborough: Warner Brothers, 1980 to 1996) CD.

[128] Savage, 352.

[129] Ibid, 353. This can be argued as there was *The Guardian*. However, it does signify that song is a more powerful vehicle for dissent than text.

[130] Savage, 349.

[131] Sadly, this philosophy was taken to the extreme by Sex Pistol John Beverly when he sank into a life of drugs and hopelessness, concluding in murder and suicide.

[132] Mikhail Lermontov, *Hero of Our Time,* 148; Chapter One, 48.

and were often viewed as nihilistic. However, they were not negative, rather they embodied "the positive courage to live without [belief]: the Sex Pistols and their supporters were an explosion of negatives and between them encompassed the rejection of most values."[133] They rejected traditional values of sacrifice for one's country, or the hero's heavenly afterlife; there is no godlike value in sacrifice. There is also no past, history is merely a march: "Oh God save history / God save your mad parade." It is reminiscent of Tsoi's "Moi druz'ya vsegda idut po zhizni marshem / My friends go marching though life."[134]Viktor Tsoi and the Sex Pistols empowered an audience who felt like outsiders.[135] Kino had a reputation for attracting a large number of technical students.[136] These youth were not viewed as being respectable, they were undesirable and low achievers.[137] Like the punk, they were among the lowest stratum in society. Both Tsoi and the Sex Pistols became heroes to those who felt dispossessed.

A powerful image of audience identification to the Sex Pistols is the incident of the Jubilee performance to celebrate the single "God Save the Queen." John Savage provided his personal description of that performance on the Thames River, during the Queen's Jubilee celebration on 13 June 1977. The boat was boarded by authorities to stop, what was understood as, an outrageous act of public blasphemy.

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[133] Savage, 195.

[134] Chapter One, 42-45; Viktor Tsoi, "Moi Druzya," *45*; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 296.

[135] Chapter One, 55-56.

[136] Steinholt, "Borzykin", 4.

[137] Wilson and Bachkatov, 56-57.

As the audience is dragged off, Rotten continues his song. Rotten has become a symbol of the crowd's own thoughts and emotions:

> [The] world is reduced to a pair of glassy eyes and snarling mouth, framed by red spikes. The audience is so close that the group are playing as much to fight them off, yet at the same time there is a strong bond: we feel what they feel. We're just as cornered.[138]

Popular music, of whatever variety, is a very visual form. Performance is vital to keep the group or star in the public's memory. Image is extremely important and aids in audience identification. Viktor Tsoi understood this when he said that it was important to show oneself in concert. Tsoi said that the concert allowed the people to see for themselves and understand what he and his band were feeling.[139] In 1986, he said that, "The concert is our only opportunity for the song to reach the public and to demonstrate and maximize the context. For me, I do not separate the writing from the performing . . . they are indivisible."[140]

Similar to the above noted description of the emotional connection of the audience to the Sex Pistols through the visual image of Rotten, Tsoi and Kino provided a memorable concert at the Moscow café Metalitsa in 1986. Sergei Borosov recalled how the authorities who objected to Tsoi's themes, stormed into this concert demanding that the group leave but everyone held their ground.[141] Footage of the event shows the dismantling of the sound equipment, yet Tsoi continues to sing, backed by two drummers and a frenzied crowd shouting the lyrics of his song

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[138] Savage, 361.

[139] Klip 11 "Sledi za soboj bezdel'nik," in *Chelovek v chyornom* (Moscow: Sozdannuyu tvorcheskoj gruppoj "A-TATA",1990-91, CD-ROM.

[140] Viktor Tsoi, LRC 1986 in Ibid.

[141] Klip 14 "Electrichka," in *Chelovek v chyornom.*

"Electrichka / Suburban Train."[142] The song is a cry of a feeling of personal entrapment in the Soviet state, and the crowd is transfixed by the image of a defiant Tsoi, his lower lip and chin jutting out as he holds his head back.[143]

The audiences of both Tsoi and Rotten were able to connect with their heroes though the live performance and shared experience. Soon both figures were emulated in style and through the re-creation of their heroic image (in graffiti, or in fanzines). The audience had created its own symbols of meaning and value.

Nancy Condee states that since Perestroika Russians have been faced with the necessity to choose between cultural objects and new consumer goods.[144] Marshall suggests that the celebrity is a form of commodity.[145] This was even understood by the Soviet government as "the commercial potential of rock" was to be investigated as part of the new economic system during Glasnost.[146] Due to increasing visual dominance (as opposed to the older text dominance), lower cultural forms began to dominate over traditional higher cultural forms. The exchanging of traditional symbols for new ones, like the heroic image of Tsoi, reveals the rise of the crowd, which was beginning to engage in valuation and symbol creating of its

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[142] Viktor Tsoi, "Electrichka," *45*, performed by Kino, recorded 1982, Andrey Tropillo (Producer), re-mastered at Studio SBI. Moscow: Moroz Records, 1996, CD; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," in in Tsoi and Zhitinskij, 295.

[143] Klip 14 "Electrichka."

[144] Nancy Condee, *Soviet Hieroglyphics:Visual Culture in Late Twentieth Century Russia* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995) , 130.

[145] Marshall, 4.

[146] Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 116.

own. The crowd was expressing power in an area that had once belonged to the state.

In all the musical traditions described above a hero is someone who dares to express truth. The bard, patriot, and punk all stress the significance of revealing truth – brutal truth. Vysotsky's life ambition was to express truth for the public. He was consumed by traditional thoughts of responsibility for the collective. Tal'kov envisioned himself as an eternal messenger of truth and savior of Russia; again the people over the individual, the future over the present. The Sex Pistols, on the other hand, called out for the expression of individual truths and the authenticity of only the present.

Tsoi is a mixture of these philosophies. He definitely loved his country and longed for change, but his voice was for the individual and individual change. Like a bard and a punk, he retains a certain street aesthetic – that makes him believable as one of the crowd. Like the patriot and the punk, his harsh criticisms of life are not softened. Viktor Tsoi is an everyday hero situated in the present.

Viktor Tsoi's song "Poslednij geroj / The Last Hero" can be understood within the context of the changing times of Glasnost:

Noch' korotka tsel' daleka
Noch'yu tak chasto khochtsya pit'
Ty vykhodish' na kukhnyu no voda zdes' gor'ka
Ty ne mozhesh' zdes' spat'
Ty ne khochesh' zdes' zhit'
Dobroe utro, poslednij geroj!
Dobroe utro, tebe i takim kak ty!
Dobroe utro, poslednij geroj!
Zdravstvuj, poslednij geroj!

Ty khotel byt' odin eto bystro proshlo
Ty khotel byt' odin no ne smog byt' odin
Tvoya nosha legka no nemeet ruka
I ty vstrechaesh' rassvet za igroj v duraka
Dobroe utro, poslednij geroj!
Dobroe utro, tebe i takim kak ty!
Dobroe utro, poslednij geroj!
Zdravstvuj, poslednij geroj!

Utrom ty stremish'sya skoree ujti
Telefonnyj zvonok kak komanda – vpered!
Ty ukhodish' tuda kuda ne khochesh' idti
Ty ukhodish' tuda no tebya tam nikto ne xhdet
Dobroe utro, poslednij geroj!
Dobroe utro, tebe i takim kak ty!
Dobroe utro, poslednij geroj!
Zdravstvuj, poslednij geroj![147]

The night is too short, the goal so far
In the night I often got to drink
You enter the kitchen but the water is bitter
You don't wanna sleep here
You don't wanna live here
Good morning, last hero!
Good morning to you, and to those like you!
Good morning last hero!
Hello, last hero

You wanted to be alone, but it quickly passes
You wanted to be alone, but there's no smog alone
Your burden is light, yet your hands go numb
And you greet the morning as a fool's game
Good morning, last hero!
Good morning to you and to those like you!
Good morning last hero!
Hello, last hero!

[147] Viktor Tsoi, "Poslednij geroj," *Nachal'nik Kamchatki*, performed by Kino, recorded 1984, 1986, Andrey Tropillo (Producer), re-mastered at Studio MMS, Russia: Moroz Records, 1996, CD; Viktor Tsoi, "Teksty al'bomov gruppy 'Kino'," 306.

In the morning you strive to leave quickly
The phone's ring is like a command "Forward!"
You go there, where you don't wanna be
You go there, but no one is waiting for you.
Good morning, last hero!
Good morning to you, and to those like you!
Good morning last hero!
Hello, last hero!

Synthesized beats and melody provide an introduction that, through the choice of such electronic instruments, seems to create a sense of the robotic. The hero wakes and is met with the opposite of what he desires. He is alienated and bored. Yngvar Steinholt noted Tsoi's use of the self-inclusive "you," which requests the listener to identify with the hero.[148] However, this song does much more than request identification with Tsoi; it invites the listener to be his / her own hero. Each listener is greeted as a hero. Tsoi's song is once again centred in the everyday struggles of Soviet life under Glasnost. The time is for the individual to rise up. The individual replaces the old prescribed heroes who taught what the people were to understand as truth. With the rise of musical stars, enjoying a more visible image, the individual is invited to seek his/her own truth and create his/her own heroic symbols.

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[148] Yngvar B. Steinholt, "Cognitive Poetics in the Analysis of popular Music: A New Approach to song lyrics?" Paper for IASPM 2005 Rome, at www.hf.uib.no/i/russik/steinholt.rir_files.html, 8.

Conclusion

> In one instant a passionate call to arms, in another an angry question. But I don't think there's a big contradiction: it's like two sides of the same coin, two features of one fact, the fact that the real movement has started.
>
> -Artemy Troitsky speaking about Viktor Tsoi[1]

The appearance and rise of Viktor Tsoi coincided with the demise of the Soviet era, its traditions, symbols, and meaning. The rise of an alternative type of hero, like the rock star reveals one way how the old regime's symbols were transformed, added to, and shaped into an ideal that represented the younger generation; an example of the relationship between art and reality. Tsoi as hero represents the diminishing value of the collective in preference of the individual; a history of individual resistance. The heroic image of Viktor Tsoi owes its existence to the context of Glasnost and relies on the inclusion of multiple voices.

The first is the voice of Mikhail Lermontov: lyrical, independent, and enduring. Viktor Tsoi's lyrics show a remarkable similarity to the Russian Romantic-Realist poet Mikhail Lermontov. Their creative works, although separated by over one hundred years, share a concern for the place of the individual in worlds that value collectivism. The appearance of two similar heroes is evidence that the tradition of resignation of personal freedom was a problem with deep historic roots. The formulation of these heroes derives from the historical contexts into which they were born. Both contexts offered youth spiritless activities designed to encourage a sense of civic duty. Lermontov and Tsoi felt that the traditional trusting obligation to the state had become servitude of the self. Often misinterpreted as anti-heroes and

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[1] Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 127.

immoralists, these men provided an alternative way of life based on artistic sensibility and individual responsibility. While individualists, they were not superfluous as they used their personal integrity to voice what they perceived as truth to their communities. Their desire was to awaken others to the illusions around them. Only strong individuals can form strong communities.

The Soviet hero, with his characteristics prescribed by Socialist Realism, is a second voice that exists in the image of Tsoi. The Soviet hero relied on an updated hagiographic formula with its heroic stories used as lessons to serve the country, aiding the emergence of diligent workers who would create perfect communism. This type of hero is particularly suitable for unstable conditions, such as times of great change or struggle. The hero's simple active force is soothing and immediately attractive. A comparison between the early Socialist Realist figure of Gleb Chumalov to the new Soviet hero Tsoi shows that although Tsoi retained certain traits, he had outgrown blind faith and sacrifice for the common good. Tsoi had the ability to see truth, to mobilize the people, to endure hardships and threats just like a real Soviet hero. Tsoi often sang of the value and promise of the people. And this belief in the people was strengthened by the existence of the Leningrad rock community, based on mentorship and sharing. He differs from the Soviet ideal in that he promotes an individual responsibility and sacrifice at any cost is definitely not permitted. Further, death transforms Tsoi into a legend, just as in Soviet hagiography. The ideal of death as a celebration of sacrifice, and the individual's value as a sacrifice do not fit. Death has value in itself. The romantic appeal of the beauty of death rather than the beauty of sacrifice for a cause prevailed. This divergence from the ideal is perhaps because heroic sacrifice was more believable in the context of the beginning of the

Soviet state, and definitely so at the time of the Patriotic War. However, by the Glasnost period, many citizens had lost their belief in such a costly ideal. Instead of blind obedience they began to question the state openly.

The inclusion of musical styles and tradition is also part of the formation of Tsoi's heroic ideal. His philosophy is compared to traditional bard, Russian patriotic rock and western punk philosophies. An examination of the treatment of the notion of death by a representative of each musical tradition helps to determine the key characteristics of Tsoi's worldview. He is not bound by traditional ideas of fatalism and promises of future glory. He is an ordinary hero that remains in the present. By the period of Glasnost, the rise of Kino's audience reveals that there is new arena for individuals to exert influence. The empowerment of the audience by the star is an example that individualism does not mean alienation. The audience is the new form of the collective, but this time outside the control of traditional authority figures. The rise of the audience reveals the power of each person to choose their own representative voice.

Viktor Tsoi represents a very inclusive heroic notion. While he symbolizes the strength of the individual, he does not dismiss the collective. All the voices – whether Romanticist, Soviet ascetic, bard, patriot or punk call out for truth. Each demands that the people will hear the call and take up responsibility. In this sense a rock star is a Soviet hero and part of the Russian tradition. A hero is someone who has the courage and ability to assume the responsibility to act or simply confront what needs to be said.

For the post-Soviet consumer society Viktor Tsoi has become a phenomenon. The impact and importance of Tsoi's music is still very much present in Russia and in

many other former Soviet republics, and even in the West. Numerous Viktor Tsoi websites offer up songs, statistics, poems and pilgrimage photographs. Many current Russian bands, like the punk group Chicherina and alternative rock group Zemfira (whose lead vocalist is an ethnic Tatar) have participated in official Tsoi tribute concerts, or recorded their own tribute albums. Each year in St. Petersburg and in Moscow cultural events are held in honour of Tsoi on his birth and death dates. Tee-shirts, posters, movies and other paraphernalia can be easily found. Recently, the Russian cultural website *Zvuki Ru!* cited discussion on plans to erect a statue of Tsoi on the famous Arbat Street close to the Tsoi wall,[2] which still bears graffiti and gifts for the fallen legend. The heroic ideal of Viktor Tsoi has been, and still is, of great importance. His story is an example of the rise of the individual in a culture that traditionally valued the collective.

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[2] "Viktoru Tsoyu postavili pamyatnik v Moskve", 17 August 2004, at www.zvuki.ru/R/P/11868.

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